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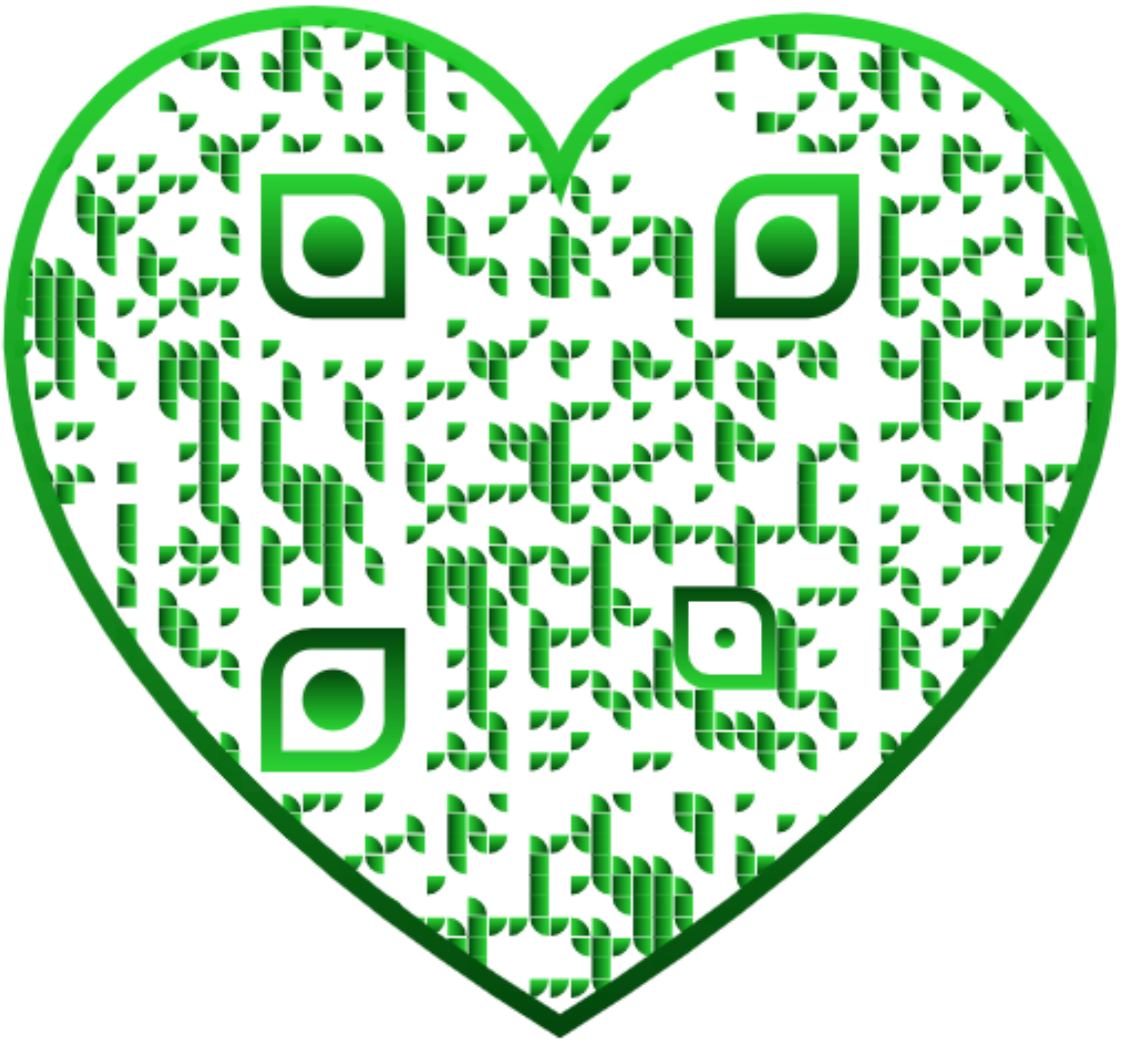
UFOs and Nukes

EXTRAORDINARY ENCOUNTERS AT NUCLEAR WEAPONS SITES

Robert Hastings



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This book is dedicated to the many courageous individuals who, in the face of continued U.S. government secrecy on UFOs and widespread public ridicule, have come forward to tell their stories. American citizens, and everyone else, owe them a debt of gratitude.

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Introduction

According to the U.S. Air Force, in November 1975, multiple UFOs—one flew so low its "disc" shape could be seen—were reported by security police to be maneuvering near, and hovering over, several Minuteman nuclear missile sites outside of Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana.[1]

This report is merely the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Indeed, periodic UFO activity at nuclear weapons-related facilities has stubbornly persisted over the years and continues to occur. As far as I am aware, the most recent sighting of a UFO near a Minuteman missile site took place in December 2006.

UFOs snooping on nukes. One might ask, "Why?" Arguably, the most important development in international affairs over last 60 years involves the creation of nuclear weapons. Their use by America against Japan, in August 1945, abruptly and decisively ended World War II. In the decades that followed, until the close of the Cold War in 1991, the ideological clash between capitalism and communism resulted in an ominous nuclear stand-off between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. which kept people worldwide in a perpetual state of anxiety about their continued survival.

That apprehension was warranted. As Hiroshima and Nagasaki demonstrated, the catastrophic effects of even a single atomic bomb were horrific in the extreme. Once the far more devastating hydrogen bombs began to be tested and deployed in the early 1950s, citizens of every nation were confronted by the stark realization that the next war held the potential for the nuclear annihilation of human civilization.

For much of that tense period, both superpowers engaged in a shared strategic policy known as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) whereby each nation vowed, if attacked, to unleash its entire nuclear arsenal against the other—and, unavoidably, the entire planet. In such an exchange, thousands of nukes would have simultaneously detonated in an orgy of devastation.

Apparently this dire state of affairs did not go unnoticed. Although most people remain completely unaware of it, a link between Unidentified Flying

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Objects and nuclear weapons is now thoroughly documented. Declassified U.S. Air Force, FBI, and CIA files establish a convincing, ongoing pattern of UFO activity at U.S. nuclear weapons sites, decade after decade. Hundreds of such sightings—many of them verified by radar—have occurred at research laboratories, fissile material production plants, test sites, missile launch facilities, bomber alert pads, and nukes storage areas.

One early FBI memorandum, dated January 31, 1949, refers to the repeated observation of "Flying Discs, Flying Saucers, and Balls of Fire" at or near Los Alamos, New Mexico—the birthplace of nuclear weapons—as early as December 1948. The memo then emphasizes, "*This matter is considered top secret by Intelligence Officers of both the Army and the Air Forces.*"[2]

Based on these documents, and other evidence, it is the contention of the author that there exists a credible connection between the appearance of nuclear weapons in the mid-1940s, and the overall increase in UFO sightings worldwide since that time. Moreover, it is probable that one of the reasons the U.S. government has attempted to conceal its extensive knowledge of the UFO phenomenon is its apprehension about having to acknowledge that unknown observers, piloting enormously superior aerial craft, have been systematically monitoring—and, as you will learn, occasionally tampering with—our nuclear weapons.

As incredible as this claim may seem, it is nevertheless based on persuasive, documented data amassed over four decades by a dedicated group of UFO investigators. Hundreds of routinely-declassified U.S. government documents, as well as many others painstakingly pried loose by researchers through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), clearly establish a UFO-nuclear weapons link. Moreover, scores of former military men have gradually come forward to confirm their involvement in one UFO-related incident or another at U.S. nuclear weapons sites. While some of these accounts have been a matter of public record for years, many others will be publicly presented in this book for the first time.

During the past 35 years, I have personally interviewed nearly 100 former and retired U.S. Air Force (USAF) personnel regarding their involvement in such cases. These individuals, ranging from retired colonels to former airmen, describe extraordinary encounters which have obvious national

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security implications. At the time of their UFO experiences, my ex-USAF sources held positions ranging from nuclear missile launch and targeting officers, to missile maintenance personnel, to missile security police. The incidents they describe occurred between 1962 and 1996, at Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (1CBM) sites controlled by Malmstrom, Minot, F.E. Warren, Ellsworth, Vandenberg, and Walker Air Force Bases (AFBs). Other former Air Force personnel report UFO activity at nuclear Weapons Storage Areas (WSAs) at Wurtsmith and Loring AFBs, where B-52 nuclear bomber squadrons were once based, as well as at the WSA at RAF Bentwaters, an American base in England.

Among the Air Force veterans I've interviewed are those who held positions of authority, including one base commander, one deputy base commander, and three squadron commanders, all of whom will be identified in this book. Admittedly, the testimony provided by these sources is anecdotal, not scientific, evidence. Nevertheless, it is offered—sometimes reluctantly—by those who were once entrusted by the U.S. government with the operation or security of weapons of mass destruction. As such, each source was subjected to, and passed, rigorous background checks and personality tests designed to determined with a reasonable degree of certainty their psychological stability and reliability.

My Air Force sources aside, I have also interviewed a number of U.S. Army and U.S. Navy veterans who also report UFO incidents at nuclear weapons storage sites or testing areas.

In light of these accounts—too numerous and credible to dismiss—I will assert that the investigation of the UFO-Nukes Connection is integral to an understanding of the enigma that is the UFO phenomenon.

Quest

I am often asked how I became interested in UFOs and, in particular, UFO activity at nuclear weapons sites. In October 1966, my father. Senior Master Sergeant Robert E. Hastings was transferred to Malmstrom AFB, Montana, where he held the position of Supply NCOIC (Non-Commissioned Officer-

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in-Charge), Special Weapons Branch, Headquarters 28th Air Division. As such, he supervised materiel support for eight subordinate radar squadrons and three fighter squadrons.

The term “special weapons” is militarese for nuclear weapons. At that time, the 341st Strategic Missile Wing, based at Malmstrom, controlled 150 Minuteman I and 50 Minuteman II ICBMs. My father’s office was located within the high-security SAGE (Semi-Automatic Ground Environment) building—a huge, windowless, concrete blockhouse that housed an intricate, computer-assisted radar tracking system, the most advanced in the world during that era. 'The system linked several radar sites around the country and was designed to monitor North American airspace. Had war with the Soviets erupted, their nuclear bombers were expected to fly over the Arctic region, into Canadian airspace, and continue southward to their designated targets in the U.S. The SAGE system, it was hoped, would track those aircraft so that U.S. fighters could intercept and shoot them down.

During the period my father was stationed at Malmstrom, I was a 16/17-year-old junior in high school. However, I also worked three nights-a-week as a janitor at Malmstrom’s Air Traffic Control Tower. One of the areas I cleaned was the RAPCON (Radar Approach and Control) center—a large, dimly-lit room in which several radar screens were constantly monitored by both FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) and Air Force air traffic controllers.

One night in March 1967, shortly after I entered the RAPCON room, one of the FAA controllers—who had previously tutored me on radar theory and operation during his work breaks—called me over to his radar scope and pointed out five unidentified “targets” then being tracked. He referred to them as “UFOs” or “Unknowns”, or some similar term. I was very intrigued and asked him a couple of questions about the targets. He said only that two jet fighters had been launched to investigate. Apparently, I asked one too many questions, because the controller abruptly asked me to leave, and to finish cleaning the room later that night. When I brought up the tracking with him again, he clearly did not want to talk about it, perhaps thinking that he had already said too much.

A few days after this incident, another reliable source told me that as the

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fighters approached the UFOs, the mysterious aerial objects had ascended vertically, at enormous velocity, leaving the jets far behind. More importantly, at the time of the attempted intercept, the five UFOs had apparently been maneuvering near Minuteman missile sites located in the Judith Basin region, many miles southeast of Malmstrom. Unfortunately, by the time I heard all of this, it was third-hand information—provided to me by my father—who had heard it from other persons working at the SAGE building, where rumors about the incident had made the rounds.

Regardless, as I was to later learn, incidents similar to this took place at Malmstrom, and other Strategic Air Command (SAC) bases, on several occasions during the Cold War era, and are documented in various declassified U.S. Air Force reports. Further, researchers can report on numerous other incidents which, although not yet documented, are based on the now-public statements of former or retired Air Force nuclear missile personnel, and security police, who were assigned to the SAC missile fields over the last four decades.

In short, my experience at Malmstrom's air traffic control tower ultimately led to my researching the subject of UFOs, and the apparent interest of those who pilot them in our nuclear weapons facilities. (I use the terms "nuclear weapons" and "nukes" throughout the book, however, the earliest nukes were actually *atomic* bombs, not the far more powerful thermonuclear weapons now deployed.)

One day in 1973, about a year after I had graduated from college, I was exploring a library's archive of newspaper and magazine articles about UFO sightings when I stumbled upon a 1966 article written by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who was at the time the civilian scientific advisor for the Air Force's UFO investigations group. Project Blue Book.[3] To my surprise, Hynek's lengthy piece mentioned an intriguing case of UFO activity at Minuteman missile sites near Minot AFB, North Dakota, in August 1966, which were similar to the incident at Malmstrom AFB, the following spring, which had first piqued my interest in such cases.

Shortly after this intriguing find I discovered two other published references to UFOs at Malmstrom's ICBM sites, in 1966 and 1967, in books written by Raymond Fowler [4] and Donald Keyhole.[5] These discoveries re-

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kindled my curiosity about the presence of these strange aerial craft at our nuclear weapons facilities. Consequently, I resolved to seek out and interview Air Force veterans who might have relevant information to share.

Research Methods

My approach to developing sources over the last three decades has been fairly straightforward. At every opportunity, I question, casually at first, individuals whose previous assignments in the Air Force—as nuclear "missileers", security police, radar operators, or pilots—may have resulted in their witnessing one UFO-related incident or another. Once I have identified an individual who *did* have a UFO experience while in the service, I formally interview him or her, if he/she is agreeable to the idea.

In the 1970s, I encountered these former/retired U.S. Air Force personnel by chance, in the course of my day-to-day activities. If someone divulged his veteran status during conversation, I would ask about the type of work he did, as well as his duty assignments. If the person had been stationed at a SAC missile or bomber base, I would raise the subject of UFOs. Occasionally, the veteran would have some knowledge of this or that incident, at such and such a base, and I would pursue the matter with him, if permitted to do so.

Obviously, this approach to data-gathering was very inefficient. However, after I ventured out on the U.S. college lecture circuit in 1981, with a program devoted to a discussion of the UFO cover-up, I soon discovered that a great many former military personnel were attending my presentations. After the lecture, I was often approached by one of these persons, who wished to divulge information about a particular UFO incident he had witnessed at one SAC base or another. Many of these veterans agreed to a full-length interview at a later date.

Over time, this kind of encounter resulted in a significant increase in the number of sources I've interviewed over the years. With the birth of the Internet, I began searching online for former military personnel to question. Many U.S. Air Force missile and bomber squadrons have alumni associations whose websites provide a guestbook or bulletin board, where veterans

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attempt to locate each other, express nostalgic comments, and so forth. Once I identify a potential source—as determined by his former job description or his having been stationed at one or more SAC bases during certain specific time-frames—I email that person, explain the nature of my research, and ask if he can be of assistance to me.

In addition to searching for sources online, I have also joined various organizations which are largely but not exclusively comprised of ex-military personnel. In 2002, the Association of Air Force Missileers (AAFM), agreed to publish in its September newsletter an article I wrote about ICBM-related UFO incidents, which contained a request for information about such cases from the organization's members.[6] This plea resulted in 37 replies, all from former or retired USAF nuclear missile personnel. While the overwhelming majority of those responses were supportive of my work, only seven individuals were able to provide useful information, about one case or another, which might be pursued. One such respondent began his letter to me, "I was wondering when something like this was going to come along." He then proceeded to tell me about a number of intriguing UFO incidents in the early 1990s, at F.E. Warren AFB. Wyoming.

However, at the other end of the spectrum, I also received an angry letter from a retired colonel who chastised me for inquiring about "Top Secret" matters. He concluded by demanding to know whether I possessed copies of any declassified UFO-related reports with his signature on them. Alas, I did not. Needless to say, the colonel did not describe the incidents which had precipitated his reports.

At the beginning of my research career, I made a deliberate decision never to approach active-duty U.S. Air Force missile personnel about nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents—even thought this particular category of witnesses would possess the most current information regarding what I supposed to be ongoing UFO activity at ICBM sites. Basically, I did not want to jeopardize anyone's military career.

However, I assumed—correctly, as it turns out—that the negative consequences for *ex-military personnel* would probably be non-existent, should their confidential discussions with me be exposed at some point. I reasoned that any official harassment of such veterans would risk generating

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too much attention, especially if the witnesses themselves pushed back—perhaps going to the media with their knowledge of a still-secret UFO incident, or by publicizing an attempt by the government to intimidate them into silence. In any case, not a single one of my former or retired USAF sources has ever suffered legal or other untoward repercussions as the result of speaking to me about their involvement in a still-classified nuclear weapons-related UFO incident.

Researcher Barry Greenwood, co-author of the groundbreaking book, *Clear Intent*, which contains many declassified documents relating to UFO activity at military sites, recently told me, "I once contacted the Air Forces Inspector General's office to ask if any broken security events relating to UFOs were ever prosecuted. They responded, 'no.' In other words, at no time in history has a military witness been punished for revealing UFO secrets. I tried to think of an example to contradict this but I couldn't."[7]

Specific Sources of Information

Not surprisingly, having approached hundreds of Air Force veterans who worked with nuclear weapons, their responses to my questions varied widely. Most claimed to have no knowledge of a classified UFO incident at an ICBM site, or nuclear weapons storage facility, or anywhere else for that matter. While it is likely that at least some of these individuals were not being candid with me, it is more probable that the great majority of them were being entirely truthful, given the *relative* infrequency, during the last several decades, of nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents. In fact, I am certain that tens of thousands of Air Force veterans who worked with nukes went their entire term of service without even hearing so much as a rumor about UFO activity at their base's ICBM sites.

But then there is the other group. When I initially approached those persons who would eventually become my sources, many were visibly wary of my interest in their UFO experiences, some of them wondering if I was setting them up for a security violation. Often, they had to be persuaded that my questions were related to research, rather than idle curiosity or something

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more sinister. A few later admitted to having suspicions that I was "working for someone" and testing their adherence to the security surrounding the incidents they had witnessed years or even decades earlier.

On the other hand, a number of other Air Force veterans whom I approached quickly acknowledged their involvement in a still-classified UFO incident—once I explained the purpose of my inquiry—and readily agreed to be interviewed. Many of these individuals told me that they had been waiting for a sympathetic listener to come along with whom they could discuss their amazing experience. Several of them had earlier confided in their spouses, or close friends, and were laughed at, and even ridiculed, for their trouble.

Of course, some of the Air Force veterans I approached over the years were themselves generally skeptical about the subject of UFOs, and just smiled at me or chuckled at my questions, sometimes making rude remarks to my face. However, other individuals became very serious and responded, usually in a low voice, "I know about some things, but I can't talk about them." Nevertheless, over time, an ever-increasing number of individuals did acknowledge their involvement in a nuclear weapons-related UFO incident and agreed to be interviewed about their experience.

Unfortunately, the great majority of these persons' revelations, although entirely credible in my view, ultimately proved to be unverifiable, simply because the events being described were usually still classified. All too often, UFO researchers have discovered that the Freedom of Information Act—designed to be an American citizen's window into otherwise impenetrable governmental secrecy, on a great many subjects—has generally yielded only limited data, or none at all, regarding especially-sensitive UFO incidents. Indeed, in the early 1980s, I attempted to access Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI, or simply OSI) files pertaining to the UFO- related incidents at Malmstrom's ICBM sites—as well as those at other SAC bases' missile facilities—only to receive a terse reply that no UFO documents remained in OSI files because they had all been "declassified". I strongly doubted this, in light of the astonishing information I was receiving from my former or retired Air Force sources. Collectively, they were describing an unmistakable and ongoing UFO presence at U.S. nuclear missile sites, decade after decade. Moreover, a number of these veterans informed me that they had been debriefed and sworn to secrecy by OSI agents.

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For the Air Force to contend that no permanent records of these remarkable events had been kept by OSI seemed to me highly unlikely. At the very least, copies of such records would have been maintained by another Air Force group, or even another agency, perhaps the Defense Intelligence Agency (D1A), or the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), given that each had received national security-related UFO data on many occasions over the years. In fact, according to one of my retired OSI sources, UFO reports had been routinely sent to DIA. Given the extraordinary accounts presented in this book, it's quite obvious that important documentation is still being kept from public scrutiny—somewhere.

Regardless, it soon became evident to me that the documents I sought would probably remain beyond my, or any other researchers grasp, for the foreseeable future. After all, not only was the Air Force failing to comply with my request to release such documents to the public, it was denying those documents' very existence.

By 1984, I knew I would get nowhere quickly by filing further FOIA requests, so I instead concentrated on locating and interviewing the Air Force veterans who knew the facts. I reasoned that, at the very least, I would be able to place their astounding accounts in the public record—during my lectures, in my published articles, and in this book.

I think it's important to state that it has never been my objective to *persuade* any Air Force veteran to discuss his knowledge of a still-classified, nuclear weapons-related UFO incident—especially if he had been formally sworn to secrecy about it. That said, I *have* endeavored to locate credible witnesses who, despite the ongoing secrecy surrounding the incident with which they were involved, nevertheless feel compelled to volunteer information about it. In other words, while I won't prod a witness into divulging sensitive information, I will readily accept any relevant data that is offered by a knowledgeable source. As I have repeatedly discovered over the years, sometimes even a retired high-ranking officer—who would never, ever think of discussing still-classified information relating to strategic planning or procedures—will, nevertheless, talk at length about the UFO that hovered over one of his squadron's missile sites, years or decades earlier.

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Exempted Military Witnesses

One category of sighting witnesses who can speak freely about their UFO experiences is composed of veterans who escaped, for one reason or another, being sworn to secrecy about the incident. While many sighting witnesses were indeed "asked" to sign a national security non-disclosure agreement following a given UFO-related event, others were often overlooked by intelligence or counter-intelligence officers, for various reasons, sometimes because they had not been centrally involved in it. In fact, I learned early in my research career that these gaps in security had occurred rather routinely over the years.

A second category of witnesses capable of providing information about ICBM-related UFO activity is comprised of those who decided at the outset to remain silent about their sighting, either because they doubted their own eyes, or their sanity, or they were concerned about the consequences. Anyone assigned to work with or around nuclear weapons is subject to a Department of Defense directive known as the Personnel Reliability Program (PRP). An individual whose conduct, on or off the job, is judged by his or her superiors to be suspect and, therefore, a potential threat to the weapons, is subject to possible psychological evaluation, and risks being relieved of duty. In short, if one wishes to continue working with nuclear weapons while serving in the U.S. Air Force, reporting a UFO is definitely not a good career move.

A number of my sources, mostly former missile security police, but a few former missile maintenance and targeting personnel as well, have told me that immediately after observing a UFO, they made a deliberate decision not to inform their superiors about the incident, and had even coerced their co-workers into silence too.

Consequently, the PRP regulation has had a chilling effect, in a great many cases, on those who might have otherwise candidly reported their observation of a UFO maneuvering near a nuclear missile site. Fortunately, the regulation has also had the unintended consequence of making available to researchers a number of sighting witnesses who can openly discuss their experiences because, by not reporting their sighting, they avoided being debriefed afterward and were, therefore, not formally sworn to secrecy about it.

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These witnesses aside, there is yet a third group of Air Force veterans who can technically discuss their UFO experiences at nuclear weapons sites. A few former missile personnel and security police have told me that when they *did* report their UFO sighting to their superior, they were merely cautioned in a low-key manner not to talk about the incident. Apparently, in some cases, this response was not even a direct order, and seemed to be more of a suggestion. Importantly, at least for my research, these particular sighting witnesses were never asked to sign a secrecy oath about the incidents they reported.

(On the other hand, some of my sources have said that when their superiors told them not to talk about their UFO sighting, the warning was anything but casual. On the contrary, these individuals state that they were, in effect, verbally intimidated into silence.)

But whether the admonition from their superior was subdued or severe, none of these sighting witnesses were ordered to report to OSI investigators for a debriefing. Thus, despite having received a verbal suggestion or warning to maintain secrecy, they were never required to sign a national security non-disclosure statement. Consequently—although the Air Force would undoubtedly disagree with my reasoning—these UFO witnesses can technically discuss their sightings openly.

In summary, either by design or oversight, the manner in which the Air Force has enforced the security surrounding nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents has varied significantly from incident to incident, base to base, and decade to decade. The reasons for these often oddly asymmetrical reactions are not entirely clear to me, even after three decades of study. The bottom line: there are lots of Air Force veterans still out there who can legally discuss their involvement in nukes-related UFO incidents.

Reliability of Information

UFO skeptics will undoubtedly question the veracity of my sources' statements. I will respond by asking what my informants have to gain by going public with their disclosures? Various opinion polls indicate that one in

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two Americans have doubts about the basic existence of UFOs. Unfortunately, all too often, persons who report having seen one—let alone those who claim to have seen a UFO hovering over a nuclear missile silo—are met with disbelief, even open ridicule, from many in our society. For this reason and others, it is difficult to imagine anyone voluntarily going public with his knowledge of a nukes-related UFO incident *unless* that individual is deeply devoted to getting the facts out, in spite of the derision he will undoubtedly endure.

A far more legitimate issue relates to my sources' ability to accurately remember their often decades-old experiences. In many cases, crucial facts—the exact date, the designation of the missile site involved, the names of colleagues who also witnessed the UFO and so on—were either vaguely recalled or omitted altogether when the incident was described to me. So the question becomes: Can anyone convincingly recall an experience which occurred years or decades before?

I think the issue here is the nature of the experience in question. Was it rather commonplace or, on the other hand, shocking and life- altering? While I am certain that a nuclear missile security guard would not recall what he had for breakfast the morning of his UFO experience, I am confident that he would remember—with a reasonable degree of factuality—the large, glowing, disc-shaped object which silently raced in from nowhere and hovered 50 feet above the missile silo at which he was posted.

This is not to say that the witness would accurately remember, decades later, many of the minute details associated with such an experience—regardless how memorable it was. For example, he might only be able to estimate the size of the UFO, the duration of its brief presence above the missile silo, and the speed at which it subsequently departed. However, he might arguably recall somewhat more clearly the object's distinctive saucer shape, as well as the fact that it was completely silent, both while it hovered and when it sped off and disappeared in the blink of an eye. These particular aspects of the encounter would have been so dissimilar to the observation of a conventional aircraft that they would have been especially striking and, dare I say it, rather memorable.

In the same vein, the Air Force guard probably would not remember the

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name of the launch officer to whom he reported the sighting, given the generally-routine rotation of missile guards from site to site. Nor would he recall the exact words his superior, or an OSI agent, used to warn him nor to discuss the incident—nevertheless, the general tone and content of the conversation would still resonate.

In short, despite the absence of various specific facts, the basic character and intensity of these experiences would certainly be unforgettable to the witness, even decades later. Therefore, I contend that what is offered in this book is a reliable, if incomplete, summary of what occurred in a given case. Of course, all histories, even those written by professional historians, are exercises in *approximation*, and the one offered here is no different.

Now, one last issue must be addressed head-on. As I have candidly admitted, my research methodology often takes advantage of various loopholes in the security surrounding nuclear weapons-related UFO activity.

I am aware that this approach in no way negates the fact that I am basically attempting to access information about still-classified UFO incidents. Consequently, I realize and accept that some might view my investigative strategy—with its reliance on technicalities to skirt official secrecy—to be illegal, unethical or unpatriotic.

In response to these criticisms, which I have heard on occasion, first let me say that after 35 years of interviewing informants, the FBI has never once knocked on my door. If what I am doing is illegal, the Powers That Be in Washington D.C. haven't brought that fact to my attention. Further, as I noted earlier, not one of my sources has been approached or threatened.

Second, over the years, I have been immensely heartened by the overwhelming support and encouragement I have received from my ex-military sources. By and large, these individuals believe, as I do, that promoting public awareness about something as important as the reality of UFOs is a constitutionally-sanctioned endeavor.

In turn, I have the greatest respect for these veterans' willingness to discuss —in the face of widespread ridicule and *potential* official harassment—the classified UFO incidents in which they were involved. Indeed, I believe their public disclosures to be courageous acts of patriotism.

There is, in my view, a principle more important than military secrecy: the

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collective right of the American people to know the facts. It has always seemed to me self-evident that if UFOs do indeed exist—contrary to longstanding official denials—and are actively monitoring and occasionally disrupting our nuclear weapons, then a matter of this magnitude is a legitimate subject for open, democratic discussion. Not that I expect the Pentagon or the U.S. intelligence community to see it that way. Regardless, I have always acknowledged that my public stance on UFOs is essentially that of an activist. As someone once said, "Sometimes, to stand up for your country, you have to stand up to your government." At the moment, the extreme tensions of the Cold War era have receded, and both the U.S. and Russia are, by treaty, currently downsizing their nuclear arsenals. Nevertheless, vast numbers of nukes still exist, on both sides of the ocean, and can be unleashed at a moment's notice. Therefore, our weapons of mass destruction remain a potential threat to the future of the human race, as well as to the environmental integrity of the Earth itself. The basic question addressed in this book is whether someone or something, of unknown identity and origin, has routinely monitored, and occasionally interfered with, our nuclear weapons and, if so, to what purpose.

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1. Phenomenon

Since the late 1940s, countless books have been written about Unidentified Flying Objects. Some have been insightful, some dogmatic, others merely foolish. Although, diligent, sincere efforts have been made to explore and understand the UFO phenomenon, all too often, in these books and elsewhere, preconceived, unproved notions have been presented as established fact—and promoted as the final word on the subject. This tendency toward overstatement and unwarranted conclusions applies equally to those who charge that UFOs are nonsense and to those who uncritically proclaim every spooky story to be a glimpse into the unknown. Unfortunately, a rush to judgment, by UFO skeptics and proponents alike, usually has been the rule when evaluating the phenomenon.

One prevalent tendency is oversimplification. Life seems to offer little which is truly straightforward and uncomplicated, yet many writers and readers seem to insist that the topic of UFOs be just that. While it would be gratifying to report that all data on UFOs point in a single direction, this is simply not the case. Understanding the UFO phenomenon is an unfolding story, and the last chapter has yet to be written. Consequently, this book may best be characterized as a progress report.

This book does not claim to prove the existence of UFOs in the strictest scientific sense but, rather, attempts to demonstrate that the UFO phenomenon is real and unique and, therefore, is worthy of serious scientific investigation. In particular, I examine startling information that has emerged from previously classified U.S. government files which hints that a handful of people in high-level positions may already possess an understanding of the UFO phenomenon far exceeding that of even the most gifted scientist or perceptive layperson.

In addition to the declassified documents, I also present in this book my interviews with former or retired U.S. military personnel who have experienced the UFO phenomenon up close and personal. In addition to providing facts supporting my thesis of a UFO-Nukes Connection, these persons provide some insight into the reasons underlying our governments

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steadfast denial of the existence of UFOs decade after decade.

Opinions, Perceptions and Facts

So, what can we presently say about the UFO phenomenon? While there are obviously more questions than answers—an enduring state of affairs, it seems—it would seem desirable to undertake an inventory of what is proven fact and what is not, what is suggested but still elusive, and finally, what is at least possible—within the context of our current understanding of the structure and operation of the universe.

Whatever the actual nature of these mysterious aerial objects, attitudes about UFOs differ dramatically, ranging from derisive dismissal to passionate belief. While nuances make each individual's point-of-view unique, the basic positions—from the skeptical to the mystical—may be summarized as follows:

1) There is no evidence whatsoever that UFOs exist, except in the human imagination.

2) There is some evidence that UFOs exist, but it is essentially unconvincing.

3) There is significant evidence that UFOs exist, and some of it is rather convincing.

4) There is overwhelming evidence that UFOs exist, but there remain many questions about their nature.

5) UFOs exist, and are man-made devices, derived either from advanced technologies developed by Nikola Tesla, or by the Nazis during World War II.

6) UFOs exist, and are unquestionably extraterrestrial spacecraft.

7) UFOs exist, and are unquestionably interdimensional spacecraft.

8) UFOs exist, and are unquestionably time machines.

9) UFOs exist, and are projections created by a superhuman intelligence.

10) UFOs exist, and are unquestionably Satanic in nature.

11) UFOs exist, and are unquestionably Angelic in nature.

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12) UFOs exist, but will forever be beyond human understanding.

Almost everyone has an opinion about UFOs, and most of them fall somewhere within this array of perceptions. It is important to note, however, that there is a distinct difference between simply having an opinion, and having an *informed* opinion. This principle applies to all subjects, including UFOs. Both hardened skeptics and passionate advocates must bear this in mind.

Moreover, there is also the issue of facts vs. the perception of those facts. There is an astute scene in film director Woody Allen's comedy, *Annie Hall*, in which an unhappy couple independently complain to their own psychiatrists. He: "We hardly ever have sex—maybe three times a week." She: "We have sex constantly—three times a week." Same facts, different perceptions. As individuals, we often see the same things differently. So it is with UFOs. In addition to the obvious division between proponents and skeptics, within each camp there exist wide-ranging opinions about the relative merits of this or that case or theory, when interpreting the data or justifying one's position on the subject.

Evidence

"Do you believe in UFOs?" This simple question is in the same category as "Do you believe in God?" or "Do you believe in an afterlife?" In other words, do you have faith that such things are real? By its very phrasing, the question implies there is no evidence that UFOs exist, and that the topic must be taken on faith. This is simply not the case.

This book presents two types of evidence relating to the UFO phenomenon: *scientific* and *anecdotal*. Each is valid within its own context, providing valuable insight into this controversial topic. Ultimately, however, scientific evidence must be the final arbiter when evaluating the nature of any unknown phenomenon.

Scientific Evidence

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Scientific evidence is empirical by nature, meaning that it is based on verifiable experience or repeated observation. Generally, empirical evidence of the UFO phenomenon cannot be verified by experiment, something that is also true in other, more established fields of scientific inquiry. For example, many of the phenomena observed by astronomers can be measured, analyzed and categorized—but cannot be replicated in a laboratory. Nevertheless, the data relating to these phenomena are considered to be valid, objective information. Similarly, there exist empirical data which, collectively, verify in a convincing manner the physical reality of UFOs.

For example, since the late 1940s, on literally hundreds of occasions, military and civilian radar controllers have tracked unidentified aerial objects traveling at hundreds or thousands of miles per hour, which then instantly stop and hover in mid-air. A moment later, with near instantaneous acceleration, the objects resume their high velocity High, and continue on their way. During other radar trackings, the UFO—again flying at high velocity—suddenly makes a hard-angle, 90-degree turn, or even an 180-degree complete reversal of course, without a turn—with no loss of velocity or damage to the craft. Several such cases of UFOs being tracked on radar will be presented later in this book.

To state the obvious, our own fixed-wing aircraft—whether American, Russian, or that of any other nationality—are simply incapable of achieving these aerodynamically-wrenching feats. In fact, our current knowledge of aerodynamic principles simply cannot even explain them. In ways that have yet to determined, the technology utilized by UFOs apparently neutralizes gravitational and inertial forces, thereby permitting them to travel at velocities and perform maneuvers hitherto undreamed of.

Because radar is based on physical principles involving the emission and reflection of radio waves, in order to detect the presence of a physical object, the data recorded by military and civilian radar operators may be considered to be empirical evidence. It can be quantified and analyzed. The search-radar track of a military jet, or passenger aircraft, is routinely accepted as empirical evidence of its position, speed, and direction of flight; a height-radar track is accepted as empirical evidence of that aircraft's altitude. If this were not so,

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modern military and commercial aviation would not be possible, given the thousands of aircraft airborne at any one moment. Similarly, radar has unquestionably been the most empirical of means currently available for establishing the physical presence and extraordinary, often mind-boggling capabilities of UFOs.

Despite efforts by skeptics to dismiss these unambiguous UFO- related radar data as suspect—resulting from weather-related phenomena, equipment malfunctions, or errors in interpretation—the weight of the evidence, in hundreds of cases, confirms the existence of unknown aerial craft operating in our atmosphere which are vastly superior to any commercial or military aircraft. Many of the U.S. Air Force and FAA records relating to these trackings are now available for scientific scrutiny In some cases, the original radar tapes are available, in addition to the written records.

Other empirical data confirming the physical reality of the UFO phenomenon derive from the aptly-named "landing-trace" case' Carefully-collected soil samples and other evidence verify, in thousands of incidents from around the globe, the existence of an anomalous physical presence which can be analyzed in the laboratory.

The world's leading expert on UFO landing trace cases is Ted Phillips. His landmark 1975 catalog, *Physical Traces Associated with UFO Sightings*, published by the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS), is remarkable for its clarity and thoroughness.[1] In the forward, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Director of CUFOS, wrote,

Physical trace cases can be defined as those UFO cases in which definite physical changes in the immediate vicinity of a UFO sighting have been recorded: marks and surface changes on the ground, damage to vegetation, residues and/or artifacts found, and surface effects of some duration on buildings and vehicles. These are all included in the broader term 'Close Encounters of the Second Kind,' in which a reported UFO has interacted with the immediate environment—animate or inanimate matter.

Phillips himself then notes, "As ground effects do not fly away—leaving only the visual report of the witnesses—but may be measured, photographed

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and studied, this type of report represents a most important part of the UFO problem. While UFOs are not available for study in the laboratory, physical traces are." Although a comprehensive examination of physical trace cases is beyond the scope of this book, the interested reader may explore Phillips' research at his website.

Anecdotal Evidence

The second category of UFO evidence to be presented in this book is anecdotal, but also often official.. There are now available for inspection thousands of pages of declassified U.S. government documents, generated as long ago as the mid-1940s, which confirm an extraordinary, ongoing, covert interest in the UFO phenomenon by our military and civilian leaders. This official interest—and sometimes grave concern—has extended to the highest levels of the Pentagon and the intelligence community. At the same time, it has been vigorously concealed from public view through the use of classification procedures, disinformation tactics and other devious ploys.

While this alternate body of evidence is not empirical, it nevertheless confirms—beyond a reasonable doubt—the importance attached to the UFO phenomenon by our government. A review of the declassified files reveals that both the military and intelligence communities have long considered UFOs to be absolutely real—in the physical sense—and a potential threat to national security. Given that a number of the documents refer to provocative UFO activity at highly-sensitive nuclear weapons sites, including missile launch facilities and missile warhead/bomb storage areas, this concern is entirely understandable. Consequently, the official cover-up of the phenomenon, if for no other reason than this, can be explained.

The nukes-related UFO incursions described in the documents have been dramatically brought to life by the testimony of a number of individuals who were actually present during one or more of those incidents. In fact, a large portion of this book is devoted to my interviews with these former USAF missile launch officers, missile targeting team members, missile maintenance personnel, and missile security guards.

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Given that information derived from personal narratives is, by definition, subjective in nature, valid criticisms raised by UFO skeptics concerning the limitations of human perception, as well as our propensity for misinterpretation when recounting the observation of unusual or unfamiliar events, must be seriously considered when analyzing sighting reports, including those presented in this book. That said, I consider my sources' reports to be vetted and credible. While there are, at times, gaps and inconsistencies in the testimony of an individual's report, collectively, these witnesses point to a remarkable and perhaps disturbing reality which has been successfully kept from public view.

In my opinion, an unbiased review of these personal narratives, as well as the declassified documents, reveals an abundance of persuasive anecdotal and, occasionally, empirical evidence which supports the objective reality of the UFO phenomenon—whose nature is not attributable to natural phenomena, the misidentification of man-made aircraft, or hoaxes.

Paradigm Shifts

While such an empirical validation for the UFO phenomenon is currently considered remote by most scientists, it is important to remember that scientific "truth" is constantly being transformed, as new evidence is accumulated and evaluated. It may, therefore, be said that while "reality" does not change, human understanding of it does, and is constantly evolving. Consequently, our perceptions of the UFO phenomenon will almost certainly continue to change over time, in one way or another.

I would argue it seems likely, if not a certainty, that the resolution of the UFO enigma will constitute a bona fide "paradigm shift." These consciousness-raising transformations are rare, but when they occur, human understanding is undeniably advanced in a manner that precludes going back to the previous, collective conception of reality. Despite their undeniable impact, paradigm shifts sometimes occur gradually, as accumulated evidence —long argued over, but eventually accepted—reaches a tipping point, resulting in a hitherto controversial theory being accepted as scientifically-

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verifiable fact.

On the other hand, a paradigm shift can essentially be instantaneous, if overwhelmingly persuasive evidence suddenly becomes available as the result of a single event. One example might be Einsteins Theory of Special Relativity. Among the many revolutionary and mind-boggling concepts contained in Einstein's paper was the then-bizarre assertion that mass and energy were variations of the same entity, as expressed by the famous equation, E=mc2. The validity of this profound insight was proved in principle in 1942, when the first nuclear chain-reaction was achieved, and soon after horrendously demonstrated as a world-changing force, in 1945, with the explosion of the first atomic bomb in the New Mexican desert, immediately followed by the total destruction of the cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with bombs two and three.

These monumental events ushered in the current Nuclear Age, thereby utterly shattering the old paradigm. Aside from the important scientific breakthrough involving the verification of the equivalence of mass and energy, there were also far-reaching implications relating to international affairs. From August 1945 onward, engaging in all-out warfare would mean that human civilization might actually be extinguished, and the planet's global environment contaminated with radioactive debris for centuries to come. Alas, after the arrival of nukes, the world has never been the same.

While it's possible that the answer to the UFO mystery will indeed be a paradigm shift, dwarfing our invention of nuclear weapons by orders of magnitude, it must be acknowledged that, at the moment, irrefutable scientific evidence relating to the nature of the phenomenon—which would settle the issue once and for all—remains elusive, at least in the public domain. If a handful of persons working for U.S. government know the answer to the riddle—and possess such evidence—they are obviously not talking.

Separating the Signal from the Noise

The fact that countless observations of Unidentified Flying Objects have

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occurred is not in dispute. What is in dispute is the nature of what has been observed. Most reported UFOs—perhaps 95% of them—are misidentified man-made or natural phenomena, as well as a few hoaxes and the odd hallucination. Very few reputable researchers dispute this. However, if one objectively analyzes a representative cross-section of the other 5% of sightings, many of them verified by radar, it becomes evident that a great many UFOs simply do not fit into these categories. In fact, from the mid-1940s to the present, there have been literally thousands—if not hundreds of thousands—of UFO sightings worldwide which simply resist prosaic explanations.

I present the number of unsolved cases as a range because different researchers use different criteria to determine whether a given sighting report is "unexplained". More fundamentally, however, attempting to quantify UFO sightings is an inherently daunting and perhaps unachievable task. Unfortunately, even after some 60 years, there is no reliable international system for collecting reports, and those that are collated, by one research organization or another, are rarely evaluated, simply because the number of qualified investigators worldwide is so small.

Nevertheless, sighting reports of "UFOs" continue to occur, somewhere in the world, on almost a daily basis. If we assume, very conservatively, that one in a hundred of those reports are of bona fide UFOs, that still leaves an awful lot of aerodynamically-anomalous craft operating in our atmosphere, on an ongoing basis.

Given this situation, how has the existence of authentic UFOs—as an entity unto themselves—remained unproved as an irrefutable fact? There are several reasons, including the four presented here.

First, manifestations of the UFO phenomenon are frustratingly unpredictable and ephemeral and are, therefore, resistant to systematic scrutiny while they are being observed. Therefore, although these "objects" have been repeatedly sighted, and even documented on a great many occasions—on film, video and/or radar—the absence of a publicly-accessible UFO—either intact or, at least, its debris—precludes a complete, scientifically-acceptable analysis of them.

Consequently, exactly what is being observed in the sky remains unproved.

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Indeed, despite countless case investigations and follow-up analyses over the years—chiefly by lay researchers—as well as a handful of scientists, the UFO phenomenon has eluded a universally-accepted explanation, because indisputable physical evidence is lacking to support any given theory. (Elsewhere in this book, I discuss the possibility that the U.S. government already secretly possesses such physical evidence. However, even if this is the case, the issue of publicly-available, and therefore, scientifically-verifiable evidence for the UFO reality remains unresolved.)

Second, ironically, with rare exceptions, scientists as a group simply do not study UFOs. A thorough discussion of *this* unexplained phenomenon may be found in the chapter, "Science, Sort of", so I will not elaborate here—except to say that it is self-evident one cannot understand what one refuses to study.

Third, there exists a pervasive atmosphere of ridicule relating to UFOs, both within scientific circles and the public at large. This counterproductive and corrosive attitude may be found in media reports, from the 1940s to the present, whereby those who report having sighted "flying saucers" or "UFOs" are immediately held up to open derision or, at the very least, are treated in a less-than-serious manner through the use of sarcasm, or attempts at humor, by which the UFO observer is made to look naive or simply foolish. Given this environment of generally-pervasive academic and public scorn, it is not too difficult to figure out why those who see UFOs frequently hold their tongues. While one might invoke Aristotle—"The high-minded man must care more for the truth than for what people think"—the fact is most folks just don't enjoy being the butt of jokes, and a great many of them will, therefore, remain silent about their UFO sighting.

Biased media accounts about UFOs aside, the same dismissive mind-set is also frequently present on a more personal level, in private conversations between individuals who have seen a strange aerial object and mention it, and those who did nor see that object. The response, depending on the attitude of the person being informed, will vary of course. However, if public opinion polls are any indicator, roughly one out of two people, when confronted with a UFO sighting report, will openly laugh at, or at least think not-very-polite thoughts about, the person doing the reporting. Why this is the case probably has to do, in part, with humans' resistance to new and unfamiliar ideas. Our natural response to the unknown, if it seems threatening, is to recoil in fear.

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However, if that unknown entity is not menacing but merely seems unusual, there is a tendency—apparently in a great many people—to simply laugh at it.

Fourth, if UFOs are in fact craft from some other world, as many believe, the U.S. government, as well as other governments all over the globe, would unquestionably attempt to keep this fact a secret as long as possible, even if no immediate threat to humanity is involved. For those who doubt this assertion, a detailed examination of the reasons for this quite predicable policy—as enunciated in a rather remarkable declassified document, as well as in the published, perceptive observations of a former CIA executive—may be found in a later chapter.

If this contention about unceasing secrecy has merit, the net result is that no one in authority, who is also in-the-know about UFOs, will acknowledge their reality, barring some unexpected development over which they have no control. Consequently, in the interim, UFO skeptics, whether scientists or laypersons, lack an officially-sanctioned reason to view the subject as worthy of serious attention and respect.

In sum, these four factors—the fleeting, intermittent nature of the UFO phenomenon itself; the pervasive scientific indifference, if not hostility, toward it; the tendency by many persons to ridicule the subject; and, finally, steadfast governmental denial about the existence of UFOs—have unfortunately resulted in the perception that there is little to study or seriously discuss. In this uncertain atmosphere, each of us has had to independently arrive at our own conclusions about the UFO phenomenon. These conclusions can be fairly astute or wildly inaccurate, depending on one's pre-existing attitude about the subject, as well as the degree to which one is familiar with the available evidence. Such is the current, sad state of affairs regarding the question of UFOs.

Pseudoskeptics—that is, debunkers—say there is no real evidence for UFOs to study, and claim that all of the sighting reports which are not hoaxes can be explained as the observation of Venus, meteors, weather phenomena, weather balloons, experimental man-made aircraft, and so on. They also assert that human visual perception can be unreliable when one is attempting to interpret the observation of an unusual event, thereby hampering an

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accurate assessment of it.

While I agree that eyewitness reports are often wrong about the details of an observed occurrence, they are usually reasonably accurate concerning the basic facts. For example, multiple eyewitnesses to a two-car automobile accident may differ as to who was at fault, the distance the cars skidded after colliding, and so on. But all of the witnesses will report that two cars were involved, rather than any other number, and none will say that one of the cars fell from the sky. In other words, generally, eyewitnesses will reliably describe the main elements of an observed event, regardless of the nature of that event.

Similarly, multiple eyewitness accounts relating to the sighting of an unusual aerial object will often vary in specifics regarding shape, size, color, structural details, or distance. Nevertheless, the observers will almost always agree on the objects basic attributes. Depending on the specifics of the case, all will report that the UFO appeared to be disc-shaped (or triangular, or cylindrical, etc.). If a disc, in particular, is reported, some of the observers may say it was a sphere or an ellipse, given that a disc can visually-morph into either of those shapes, depending on its orientation to the observer. Regardless, no one will report having seen a flying elephant. Moreover, if the UFO performed a sudden zigzag maneuver or right- angle turn, none of the observers will say that the object had only flown a level, straight-line course. So, despite what debunkers might say, there are reliable core data relating to sighting reports which can be used to build a database for study. I might also note here that when advancing the errors- in-perception argument to explain away UFO sightings, skeptics and debunkers usually conveniently ignore the great many cases when radar, sometimes multiple radars, simultaneously tracked the observed object.

In those cases, the radar data—which are empirical, not anecdotal—were found to substantiate the witness accounts, often with great accuracy, in terms of the UFO’s reported flight path, its sudden maneuvers of one kind or another, and its relative velocity. While, the importance of such independent confirmation cannot be overstated, UFO debunkers would prefer that it be overlooked, or somehow discredited, given its confirmatory effect. The twisted logic goes something like this: We all know that UFOs don’t exist, therefore, physical evidence supporting their existence must be suspect.” This

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kind of self-delusional spin is actually presented as a “scientific and rational” approach to the problem, which it clearly is not.

Another skeptical objection to the validity of UFO sighting data is that human emotions, such as fear or apprehension, can distort an observer’s summation of an event he/she considered to be threatening or disturbing. Even the sense of wonder, skeptics say, will affect the accuracy of a report of a UFO sighting. While this is undoubtedly true to some degree, I again maintain that this objection cannot be used to completely dismiss the basic attributes of what is being reported. Moreover, most UFO sighting witnesses are merely curious about, but not frightened or awed by, what they are observing, therefore, this particular skeptical argument is not even applicable in the great majority of cases.

To be sure, there are certain factors involved with UFO sightings which have the potential to undermine the accuracy of the reports, at least in some respects. For example, because the shapes of bona fide UFOs are almost always unlike conventional aircraft, their size and distance are often difficult to determine. By contrast, most people can distinguish a commercial airliner from a military jet fighter, even at some distance. Because the basic size and shape of each type of aircraft is a known quantity, one can approximately assess the distance to the aircraft. However, because most UFOs are described as discs, spheres, triangles or cylinders—having no familiar features such as wings, outboard engines, or tail structures—it often becomes unclear whether one is observing a small craft at close range, or a huge one very far away.

Another factor affecting the accuracy of a UFO report is prior-conditioning. Popular culture has molded mass perceptions regarding what a UFO is, or should be, to the degree that an unbiased assessment of an unusual aerial object is made more difficult. However, while it might be true, as skeptics assert, that many people will immediately interpret their observation of an unidentified flying object as the sighting of an alien space craft—due to the now-pervasive cultural conditioning which tags UFOs as such—it is equally true that a great many other people, chiefly those with anti-UFO biases, will automatically reject the possibility that they actually observed a “flying saucer”, even if they did. For these individuals, such an unexplained experience immediately threatens their psychological comfort zone, given

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that it suddenly and unexpectedly calls into question their personal views about the nature of reality. As a result, these persons will evaluate their own sighting in any other terms, despite the possibility that they saw exactly what they thought they saw—a flying disc.

Therefore, regarding this particular argument, UFO skeptics should not be allowed to claim, unchallenged, that pro-UFO cultural conditioning is largely or even solely responsible for the great number of reports worldwide of disc-shaped aerial craft, exhibiting very advanced aerodynamic capabilities. In fact, as a counter-argument, one might assert that if the many UFO doubters, who refused to believe their own eyes, had candidly reported what they observed, the number of bona fide sightings would actually increase significantly!

Indeed, I would argue that what has occurred in UFO sightings involving some—but certainly not all—skeptical observers, may be accurately characterized as blind rejection of a genuine if unexplained anomalous experience. Moreover, it seems, based on ample evidence, that scientists are as susceptible to this irrational behavior as anyone, although they are perhaps more adept at explaining away their experience in supposedly sensible terms than is the average person on the street.

For example, this type of spin is illustrated by the "scientific" analysis of a rather spectacular UFO sighting, reported by an airline pilot decades ago. On June 28, 1954, a British Overseas Airline Company (BOAC) passenger plane, while flying from New York to London, encountered a very strange thing high over the Atlantic, near Labrador, Canada. As the entire crew and many of the passengers watched in amazement, a huge pear- shaped object was seen at a distance, flying parallel to the aircraft. Close by the unknown craft, six small satellite objects flew around it "like bees around a hive", according to the aircraft's pilot, Captain James Howard, an ex-Royal Air Force pilot with 7500 hours of flying experience.[2]

After a few minutes, the larger object appeared to morph into an "enormous delta wing plane" as the small objects continued to swarm around it, at times randomly, but also in various precisely geometrical formations.[3] Ground-based radars at Goose Bay, Labrador tracked the bizarre aerial assembly and an F-86 Sabre jet fighter was scrambled to intercept it. As the jet—which also

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tracked the UFOs on its own radar—approached the formation, the smaller objects entered the larger one, which then quickly moved away until it was no longer visible, only a few seconds later.

So, here we have a sighting by a number of credible witnesses of unknown objects, in precise formation, pacing their aircraft for several minutes—a fact confirmed by multiple radars—which only left the scene, at high velocity, upon being approached by a military interceptor. Some years later, this stunning sighting case was reviewed as part of the so-called Condon Committee, an ostensibly scientific study of the UFO phenomenon, sponsored by the University of Colorado, which I discuss in another chapter.

And what was the committee's official finding regarding the UFOs sighted near Labrador? The final report concluded that they had been, "Some almost certainly natural phenomenon, which is so rare that it apparently never has been reported before or since."[4]

This ludicrous explanation—as well as many similar ones advanced over the years by uninvolved and uninformed scientists, who've attempted to explain away sighting cases involving obviously superior technology—illustrates the state of deep denial which inhibits genuine scientific inquiry into the UFO phenomenon. Unfortunately, a collective failure by scientists to objectively examine the evidence in these cases, usually because of nothing more than their existing biases and assumptions about UFOs, continues to the present day.

(In a similar vein, many well-meaning psychologists have dismissed UFO sighting witnesses as overly-imaginative, "fantasy-prone" persons who supposedly invent unusual explanations for mundane events, in order to make their otherwise tedious lives more exciting. But if this is so, what are we to make of the thousands of reports worldwide involving frenzied animal behavior in the presence of a landed or low-flying UFO? Fantasy-prone cows perhaps? Far more likely, both domestic and wild animals are simply reacting to a sudden, dramatic change in their physical environment—one with which they are completely unfamiliar and, for some reason, they find fearful in the extreme.)

Although most civilian scientists have routinely ignored or grossly mis-evaluated UFO-related data from the outset, the U.S. military has exhibited a

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far greater interest in, and concern about, the more credible of the sighting reports. In the late summer of 1947, after a three-month, nationwide sighting wave, Air Intelligence at the Pentagon urgently requested a report on the "Flying Discs", as the military called them at the time. (Civilian observers and the mass media tended to dub them "Flying Saucers".)

In response, Air Force Lt. General Nathan F. Twining, Commander of the Air Materiel Command (AMC), based at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, held a conference with personnel assigned to the Air Institute of Technology, the Office of the Chief of Engineering Division, various aeronautical laboratories within the Engineering Division designated T- 3, as well as Technical Intelligence officers. For raw data, these groups used in their evaluations interrogation reports supplied by the Pentagon, containing statements by military sighting witnesses.

Summarizing the input he received from his engineering and intelligence staff, Twining sent a memorandum—dated September 23, 1947 and classified Secret—to Brigadier General George Schulgen, Chief of the Air Intelligence Requirements Division, in which he presented AMC's initial assessment of UFOs. The key portions of the memo are as follows:

1. At the request of AC/AS-2 there is presented below the considered opinion of this command concerning the so- called "Flying Discs"…

2. It is the opinion that:

a. The phenomenon reported is something real and not visionary or fictitious.

b. There are objects probably approximating the shape of a disc, of such appreciable size as to appear to be as large as man-made aircraft.

c. There is a possibility that some of the incidents may be caused by natural phenomena, such as meteors.

d. The reported operating characteristics such as extreme rates of climb, maneuverability (particularly in roll), and action which must be considered evasive when sighted or contacted by friendly aircraft and radar, lend belief to the possibility that some of the objects are controlled either manually, automatically, or remotely.

e. The apparent common description of the objects is as follows:

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(1) Metallic or light reflecting surface.

(2) Absence of trail, except in a few instances when the object apparently was operating under high performance conditions.

(3) Circular or elliptical in shape, flat on bottom and domed on top.

(4) Several reports of well kept formation flights varying from three to nine objects.

(5) Normally no associated sound, except in three instances a substantial rumbling roar was noted.

(6) Level flight speeds normally above 300 knots are estimated.

f. It is possible within the present U.S. knowledge—provided extensive detailed development is undertaken—to construct a piloted aircraft which has the general description of the object in subparagraph (e) above which would be capable of an approximate range of 7,000 miles at subsonic speeds.

g. Any development in this country along the lines indicated would be extremely expensive, time consuming and at the considerable expense of current projects and therefore, if directed, should be set up independently of existing projects.

h. Due consideration must be given to the following:

(1) The possibility that these objects are of domestic origin—the product of some high security project not known to AC/ AS-2 or this Command.

(2) The lack of physical evidence in the shape of crash recovered exhibits which would undeniably prove the existence of these objects.

(3) The possibility that some foreign nation has a form of propulsion, possibly nuclear, which is outside of our domestic knowledge.[5]

General Twining concluded his memorandum by requesting that the Air Force issue a directive creating a secret project to study the UFO phenomenon. This request was implemented, and Project Sign was born. Because of the Flying Discs' evasive behavior, some military analysts suspected that the objects were secret Soviet aircraft, based on German technology captured at the end of World War II. However, given the UFOs extraordinarily radical design and vastly superior aerodynamic capabilities, as

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reported by those who had sighted the discs in flight, other analysts quickly concluded that the craft were too advanced to be Russian and might have an extraterrestrial origin.

Researcher Jerome Clark notes that the extraterrestrial hypothesis of UFOs (ETH) was seriously proposed by the Air Force only a few months after sightings of them suddenly proliferated in the summer of 1947. He writes, "When the U.S. Air Force wished to formalize information collected on UFO sightings, it created a set of guidelines for its intelligence operatives. This was the first "Draft of Collection Memorandum" in October 1947. Intelligence agents were informed as follows about the flying-disc problem:

This strange object, or phenomenon, may be considered, in view of certain observations, as long-range aircraft capable of a high rate of climb, high cruising speed and highly maneuverable and capable of being flown in very tight formation. For the purpose of analysis and evaluation of these so-called 'flying saucers', the object sighted is being assumed to be a manned craft of unknown origin. While there remains the possibility of Russian manufacture, based on the perspective thinking and actual accomplishments of the Germans, it is the considered opinion of some elements that the object may in fact represent an interplanetary craft of some kind.[6]

In other words, a mere four months after the first widely-reported UFO sighting, in Washington state, in June 1947, U.S. military intelligence analysts had already considered the possibility, among others, that the unidentified Flying Discs were alien spacecraft. Whatever the answer, it was clear very early on that the technology utilized by these strange craft was far superior to anything being developed in the U.S. at the time.

If the extraterrestrial hypothesis, and its far-reaching ramifications, was not enough to consider, little more than a year later, these same military analysts would have to grapple with a much more pressing problem: Whatever their origin might be, the mysterious aerial craft had begun to be observed maneuvering and hovering in the restricted airspace above various atomic weapons development facilities. Almost overnight, the UFOs had become a potential threat to Americas number-one national security program.

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2. Playing with Fire

In the classic 1951 science fiction film, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, an alien arrives in a flying saucer to chastise mankind for its warlike ways, and to warn of the inherent folly in possessing nuclear weapons. Although the movie-going public did not know it at the time, in reality, the U.S. government already possessed an alarming body of evidence that someone or something piloting vastly-superior, disc-shaped craft was already scrutinizing our nuclear weapons installations on an ongoing basis. Not surprisingly, this ominous development was immediately classified by the military, at a high level, and decades would pass before some of the information about these incidents was finally released to the public.

The belated official acknowledgment of the UFO-Nukes Connection finally occurred when various USAF, FBI, and CIA documents were made available to the public in the 1970s, either through routine declassification, or via the new federal law, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Although enacted in 1966, the FOIA was amended in 1974, so that a broader use of it was possible. Basically, this statute required the U.S. government to open its files —on a limited basis—to members of the public who sought information about specific classified incidents and activities. If it were not for this unprecedented legislation, it is all but certain that many nuclear weapons-related UFO sightings would have remained secret. Indeed, testimony provided by former U.S. military personnel suggests that the released information represents only a small part of the overall documentation and that many other such sightings continue to be classified.

Regardless, the U.S. Air Force and FBI documents which have been successfully declassified now reveal that, at least as early as December 1948, UFOs were repeatedly observed near the Los Alamos National Laboratory in northern New Mexico. Some three years earlier, scientists at the lab had developed and tested the first atomic bomb, as well as the two later dropped on Japan. Multiple UFO sightings were also reported at Sandia Base, in nearby Albuquerque, New Mexico where subsequent atomic weapons were engineered and assembled. Other documents from late 1940s and early 1950s, also confirm the presence of these mysterious craft near all three of

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the U.S. government's fissile materials production sites: Oak Ridge National Laboratory, in Tennessee, the Hanford Military Reservation, in Washington state, and the Savannah River Plant, in South Carolina.

For whatever reason, those piloting the UFOs—whose origin and intentions were unknown—appeared to be very interested in monitoring facilities associated with America's atomic weapons program. Needless to say, the U.S. military, as well as the FBI and the CIA were extremely concerned by this sudden, unforeseen turn of events. As noted in this book's introduction, an FBI memorandum, dated January 31, 1949, and sent to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, reports that civilian and military intelligence groups had recently met to discuss "the matter of 'Unidentified Aircraft' or 'Unidentified Aerial Phenomena' otherwise known as 'Flying Discs', 'Flying Saucers', and 'Balls of Fire'. This matter is considered top secret by Intelligence Officers of both the Army and the Air Forces."[1] The last sentence was underlined, presumably for emphasis. (This document was one of some 1500 FBI documents on UFOs released to researcher Dr. Bruce Maccabee in the late 1970s.)

The reason this subject was assigned Top Secret status soon becomes clear as the memo continues: "During the past two months various sightings of unexplained phenomena have been reported in the vicinity of the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) Installation at Los Alamos, New Mexico, where these phenomena now appear to be concentrated. During December 1948...sightings of unexplained phenomena were made near Los Alamos by Special Agents of the [U.S. Air Force's] Office of Special Investigation, Airline pilots, Military pilots, Los Alamos Security Inspectors, and private citizens. On January 6, 1949, another similar object was sighted in the same area."[2]

But this flurry of aerial activity was only a prelude. Another FBI memorandum, dated August 23, 1950, discusses these, and other UFO sightings near atomic weapons sites which had occurred with disturbing regularity during the previous twenty months.3 Directed to FBI Assistant Director D. M. Ladd, and titled "SUMMARY OF AERIAL PHENOMENA IN NEW MEXICO", the memo states,

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Observations of aerial phenomena occurring within the vicinity of sensitive installations have been recorded by the Air Force since December 1948. The phenomena have been classified into 3 general types which are identified as follows:

1) Green fireballs, objects moving at high speed in shapes resembling half moons, circles and discs emitting green light.

2) Discs, round flat shaped objects or phenomena moving at fast velocity and emitting a brilliant white light or reflected light.

3) Meteors, aerial phenomena resembling meteoric material moving at high velocity and varying in color.

The memo continues, "...Since 1948, approximately 150 observations of aerial phenomena referred to above have been recorded in the vicinity of installations in New Mexico. A number of observations have been reported by different reliable individuals at approximately the same time."

In response to these unsettling developments, the Air Force had earlier approached Dr. Lincoln La Paz, director of the Institute of Meteoritics at the University of New Mexico, and persuaded him to undertake a classified study of these aerial phenomena, in particular the green fireballs. At the time, La Paz was widely regarded as one of the world's leading experts on meteors and meteorites.

A short time later, on December 12, 1948, Dr. La Paz had his own green fireball sighting as the object "passed almost centrally across the Los Alamos reservation." Eight days later, another fireball essentially repeated the feat, prompting one witness, an Atomic Energy Commission security agent, to muse, "It might damage some of our atomic installations eventually, if it is not a natural thing [but rather] man-controlled."[4]

The FBI memo cited above summarizes the professor's findings: "[La Paz] concluded, as a result of his investigation, that approximately half of the phenomena recorded were of meteoric origin. The other phenomena commonly referred to as green fireballs or discs he believed to be U.S. guided missiles being tested in the neighborhood of the installations. La Paz pointed out that if he were wrong...a systematic investigation of the observations

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should be made immediately. La Paz pointed out that missiles moving with the velocities of the order of those found for the green fireballs and discs could travel from the Ural region of the [Soviet Union] to New Mexico in less than 15 minutes. He suggested that the observations might be of guided missiles launched from bases in the Urals...On the basis of the investigations made by Dr. La Paz and the Air Force, it was concluded that the occurrence of the unexplained phenomena in the vicinity of sensitive installations was a cause [for] concern."[5]

This FBI memorandum is important because it reveals three startling conclusions by those investigating the unexplained aerial phenomena near Los Alamos and related facilities:

First, of the approximately 150 sighting reports by military and scientific personnel at nuclear weapons installations in New Mexico, as well as civilians in the region, fully half of the objects observed were judged not to be meteors. Second, the non-meteoric and, therefore, almost certainly manufactured objects were reported to be moving at fantastic velocities—as high as 27,000 mph—thereby excluding the possibility that they were conventional aircraft or rockets. (Such velocities were first approached—but not matched—by NASA rockets in the late-1960s, during the Apollo missions to the Moon.) Third, the unknown objects were considered by government investigators to be a cause for concern, thereby minimizing the likelihood that they were highly-advanced U. S. secret weapons.

Some years later, after many more green fireball sightings, La Paz openly discussed his conclusions about them. A January 22, 1953 article in the *New Mexican*, stated: "A fireball expert said today Russia may be scouting the United States and other parts of the world with strange new guided missiles. Dr. Lincoln La Paz said a good many shreds of evidence point to green fireballs sighted throughout the world being a type of missile—possibly of Soviet make."[6]

Whatever La Paz' assessment of the fireballs may have been, in the decades since, no official investigation or independent research has ever discovered credible evidence to confirm that the objects were of Soviet origin. Similarly, no verifiable information has surfaced to indicate that the sightings were of experimental American aircraft or rockets.

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But the green fireballs were only half of the story. In one classified report to the Air Force, La Paz noted that in addition to those sightings, "the number of so-called 'flying saucer' incidents in this region has attained an all-time high."[7] While the sighting reports came in from all over northern New Mexico and west Texas, the saucers were frequently sighted around the Sandia Base atomic weapons installation, as well as the weapons laboratory at Los Alamos, as noted in the previously-cited January 31, 1949 FBI memorandum.

In short, during the late-1940s and early-1950s, someone seemed to be intent on conducting repeated, unauthorized over-flights of the U.S. governments top secret atomic weapons sites. Reliable eyewitness accounts indicated that the aerial craft involved in these incursions were revolutionary in design—usually disc-shaped, but sometimes reported as spherical, cigar-shaped, or diamond-shaped—and vastly superior in performance to any known jet aircraft or rocket.

An important, if brief, public examination of this situation was provided in June 1952, when *LOOK* magazine published an article titled, "Hunt For The Flying Saucer".[8] Among other revelations, the exposé quoted Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, chief of the U.S. Air Forces UFO investigations group, Project Blue Book, as saying that many of the sighting reports had originated at one atomic weapons-related site or another, not only in New Mexico, but all around the country. Given its investigative mission, Blue Book had been privy to classified intelligence summaries relating to these still-unsolved incidents at "sensitive" installations. According to LOOK, the "ominous correlation" between such sightings and these top secret facilities had been brought to the attention of high ranking Air Force officers, prompting a meeting at the Pentagon to discuss the apparent UFO-nukes link.

Later, after resigning from the Air Force, Ruppelt wrote the book, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, in 1956, in which he expanded upon his earlier comments to LOOK, noting, "UFOs were seen more frequently around areas vital to the defense of the United States. The Los Alamos-Albuquerque area, Oak Ridge, and White Sands Proving Ground rated high."[9]

Each of these locations was directly or indirectly involved in America's

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nuclear weapons program: Los Alamos National Laboratory conducted theoretical research and designed the bombs. In Albuquerque, Sandia National Laboratories engineered those weapons, which were often transported to nearby Manzano Base, an underground storage facility. At Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB), located just west of Manzano, the nukes were loaded onto strategic bombers and cargo aircraft and flown to test sites in Nevada and the Marshall Islands, in the Pacific Ocean, as well as to military bases throughout the continental U.S. and Alaska, then not yet a state.

Meanwhile, at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, in Tennessee, reactors feverishly produced weapons-grade uranium and plutonium for an ever-expanding nuclear arsenal. (Oak Ridge had also played an essential role in the World War II-era Manhattan Project, by providing the uranium tor the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.) Various declassified FBI and Air Force memoranda, and other reliable reports, note no fewer than 14 separate UFO sightings at Oak Ridge, during the period from October 12 to December 20, 1950. The tally was based on reports provided by various governmental security officers at the installation, as well as military pilots and radar personnel.[10]

At the third UFO sighting hot spot mentioned by Ruppelt, White Sands Proving Ground, in southern New Mexico, the military was engaged in ongoing tests of the rudimentary rockets which would, within a decade, evolve into highly accurate, intercontinental delivery systems for U.S. nuclear warheads—as well as the boosters NASA would use to take its first, tentative steps into space.

But these key strategic sites were not the only ones under apparent UFO surveillance. In his book, Ruppelt revealed a dramatic incident which had occurred at yet another. “On the night of December 10, 1952,” he wrote, “near another atomic installation, the Hanford plant in Washington, the pilot and radar observer of a patrolling F-94 spotted a light while flying at 26,000 feet. The crew called their ground control station and were told that no planes were known to be in the area. They closed on the object and saw a large, round, white 'thing' with a dim reddish light coming from two ‘windows.’ They lost visual contact but got a radar lock-on. They reported that when they attempted to close on it again it would reverse direction and dive away.

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Several times the plane- altered course itself because collision seemed imminent."[11]

At the time of this incident, the Hanford nuclear plant was the world's largest producer of weapons-grade plutonium. Moreover, during World War II, its reactors had provided the fissile material used in both the first atomic bomb test in New Mexico, and the bomb that destroyed Nagasaki.

But the attempted intercept of the UFO was not the first such incident near the Hanford plant. A now-declassified Air Force intelligence report confirms that on May 21, 1949, a "silvery, disc-shaped" object had been sighted hovering directly over the plant by Hanford personnel. Simultaneously, the UFO was being tracked on radar at nearby Moses Lake AFB, where an F-82 fighter had been scrambled to intercept it. However, before the jet could get close enough, the UFO left the vicinity at a high rate of speed—faster than any aircraft—according to the report. Although this incident was publicly dismissed by the Air Force as the sighting of a conventional aircraft, the classified report on the case contained the investigating officer's written remark that the sighting involved "flying saucers" [sic].12

Another case of documented UFO activity in the restricted airspace above the Hanford plant occurred fourteen months later. A declassified but undated U.S. Army Memorandum For Record, whose subject was "Flying Discs", states, "The following information was furnished Major Carlen by Lt. Colonel Mildren on 4 August 1950: Since 30 July 1950 objects, round in form, have been sighted over the Hanford AEC [Atomic Energy Commission] plant. These objects reportedly were above 15,000 feet in altitude. Air Force jets attempted interception with negative results. All units including the anti-aircraft battalion, radar units, Air Force fighter squadrons, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have been alerted for further observation. The Atomic Energy Commission states that the investigation is continuing and complete details will be forwarded later."[13] The memo was signed by Major U.G. Carlan, General Support Center (GSC), Survey Section.

As if to underscore the importance of the Hanford site, five months before the jet intercept attempt mentioned by Ruppelt in his book, another UFO sighting occurred at Hanford, and was reported by *The Miami Herald*: "On July 6, 1952, four non-scheduled airline pilots reported they saw a saucer

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hovering near the atomic energy plant at Richland, Washington. The four were Captain John Baldwin of Coral Gables, Captains George Robertson and D. D. Shenkel of Miami and Steven Summers of Hialeah—all of them veteran airmen."[14] (Ruppelt later claimed the sighting was of a Skyhook Balloon, but this seems questionable, given the details in the published report.)

Elsewhere in his book, Ruppelt noted that UFOs had also demonstrated a distinct interest in yet another nuclear weapons-related plant which had just come on-line. He wrote, "Many of the reports came from people in the vicinity of the then new super-hush-hush AEC facility at Savannah River, Georgia [sic]."[15] The fissile materials plant is actually in South Carolina but located on the river which serves as a common boundary between that state and Georgia. It became operational in 1952, and would for the next 40 years produce much of the plutonium and tritium used in America's nuclear weapons.

One declassified FBI letter, dated May 15, 1952, reports that miniature "flying disks" had been sighted at the Savannah River Plant just days before, on May 10th. The lengthy letter was sent by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to the director of the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations, as well as the Inspector General of the Air Force.

According to Hoover, four DuPont company employees working at the plant "saw four disk shaped objects approaching 'the four hundred area' from the south which disappeared in a northerly direction." Two other disks, each flying alone, were sighted by the same workers shortly thereafter. Hoover continued, "The disks were described by the above- mentioned employees as being approximately fifteen inches in diameter and yellow to gold in color. All of the objects were allegedly traveling at a high rate of speed and at a high altitude without any noise." Hoover wrote that one of the solitary discs "was reportedly traveling at such a low altitude it had to rise to pass over some tall tanks which are in 'the four hundred area.' The employee referred to above advised the objects were weaving form left to right but seemed to hold a general course."[16]

The 400 Area contained a number of large holding tanks in which plutonium processing-related effluents were stored. Apparently, the size of

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the diminutive discs was estimated based on the one observed maneuvering at low altitude near the tanks, whose dimensions were known and used for comparison. As will be discussed later in this chapter, other sightings of mini-UFOs—which are presumably remote-controlled—had been reported three years earlier at Killeen Base, a nuclear weapons storage site in Texas.

Another early UFO sighting at Savannah River was revealed by physicist Dr. James McDonald, in his Prepared Statement before the House Committee on Science & Astronautics, 1968. He wrote:

A rather illuminating multiple-witness case was called to my attention by John A. Anderson, now at Sandia Base, New Mexico, but in 1952 working as a young engineer in the Savannah River AEC facility near Aiken, S.C. After a considerable amount of cross-checking on the part of both Anderson and myself, the date was inferred to be late July, 1952, probably 7/19/52. The circumstance giving a clue to the date was that, at about 10:00 a.m. on the day in question, Anderson, along with what he estimated at perhaps a hundred other engineers, scientists and technicians from his group were outside watching a 'required attendance' skit presented from a truck- trailer and commemorating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the DuPont company, July 18, 1802. Anderson indicated that some less-than-absorbed in the skit first spotted the unidentified object in the clear skies overhead, and soon most eyes had left the skit to watch more technically intriguing events overhead. A greenish glowing object of no discernible shape, and of angular size estimated by Anderson to be not over a fifth of full- moon diameter, was darting back and forth erratically at very high speed. Anderson had the impression it was at great altitude, but conceded that perhaps nothing but the complete lack of sound yielded that impression. It was in view for about two minutes, moving at all times. He stressed its 'phenomenal maneuverability'; it repeatedly changed direction abruptly in sharp-angle manner, he stressed. The observation was terminated when the object disappeared over the horizon 'at apparently tremendous velocity.'

... Anderson said that the event was discussed among his group afterwards, and all agreed it could not possibly have been a conventional aircraft. He remarked that no one even thought of suggesting the unreasonable notion

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that it was an hallucination or illusion. Despite searching local papers for some days thereafter, not a word of this sighting was published, and no further information or comment on it came from within the very security conscious AEC plant. He was unaware of any official report...If, as Anderson is inclined to think, this event was on July 19, 1952, it occurred only about twelve hours before the famous Washington National Airport radar-visual sightings; but this date remains uncertain.[17]

Air Force and FBI investigators were not the only members the U.S. government worried by this kind of development. At least one high- level CIA analyst also expressed concern over UFO sightings at sensitive government installations. On December 2, 1952, Dr. H. Marshall Chadwell, Assistant Director of the CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence, wrote a Secret memorandum to CIA Director Walter B. Smith, titled, "Unidentified Flying Objects." The memo noted repeated UFO sightings at important, but unspecified U.S. "defense" sites and stated, "At this time, the reports of incidents convince us that there is something going on that must have immediate attention...Sightings of unexplained objects at great altitudes and traveling at high speeds in the vicinity of major U.S. defense installations are of such nature that they are not attributable to natural phenomena or known types of aerial vehicles."[18]

While Dr. Chadwell did not identify the "major" defense sites at which the sightings had occurred, it is almost certain that he was referring to the plants at which nuclear weapons materials were being produced. Within the previous seven months, UFOs had been reported by military personnel or civilians near Oak Ridge, Savannah River and Hanford. (Another military UFO sighting and radar tracking—the one reported by Edward Ruppelt—occurred at the Hanford plant eight days after Chadwell wrote his memorandum.)

Dr. Chadwell concluded his memo to the CIA director by stating, "Attached hereto is a draft memorandum to the NSC (National Security Council) and a simple draft NSC Directive establishing this matter as a priority project throughout the intelligence and the defense research and development community."[19]

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Clearly, Chadwell considered UFO sightings at nuclear weapons sites to be of great concern and, therefore, urged that they be brought to the attention of the highest levels of the U.S. government. Researcher Brad Sparks correctly notes that CIA Director Smith did not approve Chadwell's recommendation that the NSC be presented with the matter. Regardless, by the time Chadwell wrote his memo, the mysterious aerial objects had been intermittently observed near installations associated with atomic, or the new thermonuclear weapons for a full four years—their origin, and the intentions of their presumed pilots still unknown.

Bursts of Light and Tiny Intruders at Killeen Base

In January 1949, just as sightings of green fireballs were escalating in New Mexico and west Texas—many of them reported by scientists, technicians and military personnel at the Los Alamos and Sandia Laboratories—observations of mysterious "flares" suddenly erupted at the U.S. Army's Camp Hood, in central Texas.

After initial doubts about the quality of the sighting reports, the repeated appearance of the phenomenon soon alarmed the intelligence officers at the base, whereupon various military commands were notified about the unexplained observations. The rising concern was certainly appropriate. Located within the boundaries of Camp Hood was the new, highly-restricted Killeen Base, where the Air Force stored and assembled its fledgling arsenal of atomic weapons. Also known as Site Baker, Killeen

Base was controlled by the Atomic Energy Commission and ranked as one of the most sensitive atomic weapons sites in the U.S.

Researcher Loren Gross notes, "After becoming a true bomb factory, Sandia shipped assembled bombs to Camp Hood, Texas, where there was a secure storage site guarded by the 12th Armored Infantry Battalion under the command of the Fourth Army...It is suggested that the 'green fireballs' which appeared over Sandia in late 1948 bear a direct relationship to a sudden ramp-up of American nuclear weapon production. [Similarly,] in March 1949, when strange 'flares' appeared around the 'Q' area at Camp Hood, it is

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suggested that this interest by UFOs was triggered by the recent arrival of the first shipment of atomic bombs which was stored as America's first nuclear bomb stockpile."[20]

Declassified U.S. Army documents confirm that on the evening of March 6th, security guards at Killeen Base observed an unusual flash of blue light in the northeastern sky. Minutes later another guard saw a white light with an orange tail sweep across the western horizon. Not long after, two different guards reported a bluish-white streak of light in the same region of the sky. Similar sightings occurred two days later, on March 8th.[21]

Initially, the flare sightings at Camp Hood, while puzzling, were deemed to be non-threatening. Suspicions arose that military flares were being fired off in an unauthorized manner, but this conjecture quickly proved to be unfounded. When a base intelligence officer, Captain Horace McCullough, saw one of the mysterious flashes of light on the evening of March 17th, he realized that it was not a flare or meteor and immediately placed Camp Hood on alert.

Researcher Jerome Clark notes that a total of seven sightings occurred that night, involving multiple observers at a different locations. The resulting wealth of observational data permitted a triangulation of the objects' trajectories. The results suggested a deliberate surveillance of Killeen Base. In mid-April, this finding was finally enunciated when one of the army investigators remarked that the unknown objects had essentially "bracketed" the nuclear weapons area. The flashes of light appeared again on April 16th and 18th.[22]

If this were not enough, the Hare sightings were only the opening salvo. Another mysterious aerial phenomenon was reported at Killeen Base on April 27th, when a small glowing object, the size of a ping-pong ball, was spotted by two groups of security guards and other personnel. The tiny intruder silently flew within six feet of the observers before passing through the branches of a tree as it left the area. Five minutes later, four other security guards observed a baseball-sized light approach them silently at an estimated speed of 60-70 mph. It appeared to have a small metallic cone attached to it's aft section. At the last moment, the light abruptly changed course and raced away. Twelve minutes after that sighting, a third object—or perhaps the first

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object—the size of a ping- pong ball, approached the second group of guards. It Hew a zigzag path for a few seconds before disappearing.[23]

But this amazing, three-act display was just the prelude for the next night's performance. A declassified army intelligence report reveals that on the evening of April 28th, a total of 12 guards and other personnel were involved in nine separate sightings of small lighted objects, maneuvering southeast of Killeen Base. One white light displayed the previously-reported conical appendage, while other lights altered their color from white to red to green. One sighting involved a group of four lights; another formation was composed of eight to ten lights.[24]

Following these ostentatious displays, it at last became obvious that something important and possibly threatening was taking place, and concern at Camp Hood rose to a new level. On May 5, 1949, a conference was held at the base, attended by representatives of the Fourth Army, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), the Office of Naval Intelligence, the U.S. Army's Counter Intelligence Corps, the FBI, and the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project.

Reviewing declassified documents, researcher Clark discovered a difference of opinion among the meeting's attendees. The Army and Navy representatives believed the mysterious developments to be a cause for "grave concern." However, the special weapons project representatives felt that the sightings involved as-yet unexplained natural phenomena. The FBI and AFOSI attendees evidently did not offer an opinion of the aerial displays.[25]

Although this apparent lack of unanimous concern on the part of U.S. government representatives may seem odd to us six decades later, it was fairly typical during the early period of UFO sightings, simply because the nature of the reported phenomena and, therefore, their threat-potential remained in doubt. However, as reports of unexplained aerial objects became widespread and persisted into the decade of the 1950s, it became increasingly clear—as former U. S. Air Force Captain Ruppelt noted in his 1956 book—that a significant number of the sightings were occurring at various atomic weapons-related sites. With this startling realization, the stakes were raised immeasurably and UFOs were finally considered to be a genuine threat to the

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U.S. atomic weapons program by all branches of the military as well as the intelligence community.

If the incidents at Killeen Base had not immediately instilled a new sense of urgency in military investigators to decipher, as quickly as possible, the purpose of the UFO incursions, other developments back in New Mexico certainly would. Civilian atomic weapons specialists and military personnel at Sandia Laboratory and nearby Kirtland AFB, began to report a flurry of UFO activity whose scope and depth could no longer be ignored.

Building Bombs in Albuquerque

In July 1945—the month the first atomic bomb was secretly detonated near Alamogordo, New Mexico—the Los Alamos laboratory created the "Z Division", which would henceforth oversee weapons design, engineering and testing. In essence, America had taken its first steps toward the mass-production and stockpiling of atomic bombs.

Because of space limitations at Los Alamos, and because it would need to coordinate its activities with the military, Z Division was quickly moved to the old, unused Oxnard municipal airfield at Albuquerque, located just east of the Army Air Force's Kirtland Field. Given its proximity to the nearby Sandia Mountains, the new atomic weapons facility came to be known informally as Sandia Base. By April 1948, the site was designated a separate branch of Los Alamos and formally renamed Sandia Laboratory. In 1979, the facility was again renamed, becoming Sandia National Laboratories.

For its part, the U.S. military—specifically, the Army's Manhattan Engineering District, otherwise known as the Manhattan Project—also moved its atomic weapons operations, known as the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, to Sandia Base in 1945. Some four years after the end of World War II, in December 1949, the Department of Defense established the Armed Forces Special Weapons Command (AFSWC) and logically located its headquarters at Sandia Base, so that it could continue coordinating the military's acquisition of the atomic weapons being assembled there.

Perhaps not surprisingly, civilian and military personnel at Sandia

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Base/Laboratory began reporting sightings of “flying saucers” and mysterious green fireballs in late 1948, throughout 1949, and into the early 1950s—the same period that both phenomena were reported at Los Alamos. Similar sightings were made by military personnel stationed at Kirtland AFB, located just west of Sandia Base. The following examples are drawn from reports compiled by the Kirtland AFB Office of Special Investigations and other declassified files:

-Dec. 6,1948,10:55 p.m. Atomic Energy Security Service officer Joseph Toulouse was driving west when he saw a green fireball almost directly overhead, above the Sandia Base atomic weapons assembly site. The fireball was slightly to the northwest of his position, arching slightly downward from east to west. It’s apparent size was one- third the size of the full moon and it had a flaming tail.[26]

-January 6, 1949, 5:30 p.m. Kirtland AFB OSI Special Agent Jack L. Boling later wrote that Matthew J. Doyle, Sandia Base’s Chief of Physical Security had forwarded a report of a UFO sighting at Kirtland’s Ordnance Area, directly adjacent to Sandia, where atomic weapons components were stored and assembled before being transported elsewhere by bomber or cargo aircraft. The object, sighted by a Military Policemen (MP) guarding the area, was described as diamond-shaped, bright white, and traveling faster than any jet.[27]

-February 17, 1949. A fireball and a UFO were observed on the same day. Kirtland AFB OSI Special Agent Captain Melvin E. Neef reported that a fireball, orange- red in color with a “gas flame” blue tail, was visible for 5-7 seconds at Sandia Base at 5:52 a.m. That evening, a bright “yellow-orange cigar-shaped light” was observed by approximately 100 people, including Sandia’s military security guards, for seven minutes, between 5:59 and 6:06 p.m.[28]

-March 13, 1949,9:53 p.m. Two MPs guarding the Sandia Base Technical Area reported seeing a spherical object, bluish-white or greenish-white in

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color, with a flaming blue tail twice as long as the object. It was approximately one-half the size of the full moon and made no sound.[29]

Other declassified OSI reports discuss fireball sightings at Sandia Base on September 27th, September 30th, and October 10th. Yet another fireball was observed at Kirtland AFB, on November 27th. The observer was W.W. Jones, the Civil Aeronautics Administration's (CAA) Chief Controller at Kirtland's air traffic control tower, who compared the object's apparent size to a lead pencil eraser held at arm's length. It was a brilliant blue-white like "a magnesium flare." The same object was observed by Kirtland's Deputy Base Commander, Lt. Col. Charles E. Lancaster Jr., as he traveled near Socorro, NM. He described the fireball as pale green to pale blue and said that it appeared to fall near Albuquerque.[30]

But the displays were not over. Mysterious aerial phenomena continued to be sighted around Sandia Base on numerous occasions the following year. On March 21, 1950, many witnesses at the weapons lab and Kirtland AFB observed multiple UFOs between 1:00 and 1:30 p.m. No fewer than 10 separate OSI Spot Intelligence Reports state that various witnesses described the UFOs as round, silver-colored and silent. They were reportedly flying faster than a jet, performed zigzag maneuvers, right-angle turns, and instantaneous, 180-degree reversals of course.[31]

Three days later, on March 24th, at 3:05 p.m., three MPs at Sandia reported seeing a round, silver-colored object the size of a softball held at arm's length. It was hovering when first sighted but then departed rapidly, at perhaps 700 mph. One MP reported a vapor trail which showed the UFO had flown in a looping motion. Another MP reported that the object at first traveled in level flight, then shot straight up. A few minutes later, at 3:47 p.m., another MP sighted four round, silver-colored objects flying directly over Sandia Base at an estimated altitude of 7000 feet. They reportedly flew faster than any jet.[32]

These examples are only a fraction of the total number of incidents at Albuquerque during that period. In short, throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, UFO and fireball sightings occurred at Sandia Base and Kirtland AFB with alarming frequency, at least from the military's point- of-view. As the

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U.S. atomic weapons program plowed ahead with a new sense of urgency—in response to the Soviets' detonation of their first atomic bomb, in August 1949—work at the Sandia/Kirtland complex became increasingly crucial to U.S. national security. While Sandia Lab, operated by the Atomic Energy Commission, feverishly engineered bomb components, the Air Force made the logical decision to base its 4925th Test Group (Atomic) at nearby Kirtland AFB. As the squadron's name implied, its sole purpose was to test atomic and, eventually, thermonuclear weapons, also known as hydrogen bombs.

During that era, the 4925th was composed of several B-29 and B-50 strategic bombers, as well as tactical B-45 bombers. Some of the B-29s were no longer bombers, per se, having been converted to collect airborne radiation samples. The squadron's support aircraft included C-47 cargo planes, retro-fitted as photographic aircraft and used to film the numerous atomic blasts in the Nevada desert, as well as the far more powerful thermonuclear weapons later detonated at the test areas in the Marshall Islands.

Analyzing the Situation

Given the extraordinary nature of the U.S. government's facilities at Albuquerque, one obvious interpretation of the UFO sightings at Sandia Base and Kirtland AFB is that someone or something was monitoring, on an ongoing basis, the nuclear weapons manufacturing and testing operations being conducted there. A second possible scenario, perhaps in conjunction with the first, is that those piloting the UFOs were bent on performing provocative aerial displays at these locations, often in broad daylight, so the powers-that-be in Washington could not possibly ignore their presence near these key atomic weapons-related sites. In any event, whatever their identity and intent, the UFO pilots certainly knew how to put on a show!

While the purpose of this aerial activity continued to confound and alarm the military, the already high stakes inherent in atomic warfare would soon be raised exponentially. On January 31, 1950, President Harry S. Truman

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approved the development of the hydrogen bomb, perhaps the ultimate weapon of mass destruction. According to a Gallup poll taken at the time, three of four Americans agreed with his decision. The first H-bomb, tested in 1952, would be some 800 times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Shortly after Truman's announcement, the Manhattan Project's director, physicist Robert J. Oppenheimer, warned, "If there is another war, this civilization may go under."[33] Predictably, the U.S. and the Soviet governments ignored him. and each country's thermonuclear weapons programs only intensified.

Meanwhile, UFO activity at Albuquerque proceeded apace. On May 1, 1952, one group of sightings had an intriguing twist when four "flying saucers" were observed cavorting near a dozen USAF atomic bombers, flying in formation over the city at the time. The following day, an article in the *Albuquerque Journal* revealed that one of its employees, Eugene Cline, had reported seeing the four silvery UFOs maneuvering near a group of B-29s or B-50s (a modified B-29) and stated, "The four round objects, shining more brightly than the bombers, appeared to be keeping up to the planes at the same altitude." Cline fixed the sighting at 1:45 p.m. MDT and described how the UFOs had seemingly "played tag" with the bombers, flying close to them, then racing away. "They moved in a tumbling or pitching manner," he said, "Then one appeared to be climbing straight up...its speed was twice as fast as any jet." Cline described the objects as disc-shaped [they may have actually been cylinder-shaped] and estimated their "diameter" as a third of the wingspan of the bombers, "assuming that they were all flying at the same altitude."[34]

Around the time the four discs—if that was their actual shape—were dancing around the flight of bombers over Albuquerque, other persons working at Sandia Lab witnessed the same, or perhaps a different group, of UFOs which put on a dazzling display of technological prowess directly over their heads. In 1984, I interviewed one of those witnesses, retired Sandia Laboratory employee Howard Burgess. Ultimately, Burgess would not only discuss that sighting, but also his knowledge of similar incidents involving other Sandia Lab personnel on other occasions. By the time I first interviewed him, Burgess had retired from the lab, after working there for nearly thirty years as a technical specialist engaged in weapons research.

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Howard later became a friend and was one of the most cautious, deliberate, scientifically-oriented persons I have ever met.

Burgess' own UFO sighting that day occurred as he and some coworkers were mounting an antenna on the roof of one of the lab's buildings. Without warning, the men were startled to see a large, silver- colored, cylinder-shaped object in the sky, tumbling end-over-end. Burgess said that it was completely silent, and estimated that it was at least as long as the fuselage of a B-29 bomber. It flew directly over Sandia Base, which surrounded the nuclear weapons lab itself and, as it tumbled, the men could see that its blunt ends were dark in color.

As Burgess and the others stared at this sight in amazement, two other tumbling cylinders came into view—each flying directly toward the first one. Just moments before a seemingly unavoidable three-way collision, the two new objects suddenly and simultaneously altered their courses and began to fly parallel with the first one—all of them tumbling in unison as they disappeared into the distance.

Stunned by the sighting, Burgess and the others temporarily abandoned the installation of the antenna and excitedly discussed the UFOs among themselves. Eventually, one of the men reported the incident to the lab's security office which, at that time, was operated by the Air Force. Later that afternoon, Burgess and all of the men were debriefed, informed that the incident was classified, and then sworn to secrecy about what they had witnessed.

However, the cat was already out of the bag. Undoubtedly to the chagrin of the Air Force security personnel at Sandia Lab, the same Albuquerque Journal article which reported the flying saucers near the flight of bombers, also mentioned the UFOs seen by Burgess and the others. Apparently, sometime between the sighting itself and the security briefing at the lab later that afternoon, two of the individuals on the roof with Burgess had contacted the newspaper and reported it. Curiously, however, the newspaper article said that "the Sandia men" had described seeing two disc-shaped craft, which had appeared one after the other. Only then, according to the article, did a cylinder-shaped object appear, "rolling end over end."[35]

Obviously, the published details do not exactly match Burgess' memory of

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the incident, as he related it to me some 32 years after the fact. It remains unclear whether Burgess' recollection was faulty when he described three tumbling cylinders maneuvering near each other, or whether the *Albuquerque Journal* had merely misquoted the two other Sandia employees who had called the paper. In any case, because Burgess' had been told that the sighting was classified, he kept no notes about it.

As I got to know Burgess over the years, I found him to be mentally sharp, despite his advanced age. On other, non-classified topics of interest, he kept meticulous notes while gathering data, a fact confirmed to me by some of his former Sandia colleagues, and something I observed myself. Shortly after his sighting, despite the warning he and the other UFO sighting witnesses had received from Air Force security personnel at the lab, Burgess and several of his co-workers began to gather at each others' homes, several times a year, for unofficial, off-the-record discussions about UFOs. He told me that during the first meeting, a solemn agreement was undertaken by the members of this informal discussion group, whereby they all vowed that in the future, Sandia's security office would not be informed of any new UFO sightings which might occur. This would allow the men to freely discuss the incidents among themselves, without violating the inevitable secrecy oaths which would be imposed following such sightings.

The sighting incident described by Burgess was startling enough but, I must confess, his admission that several of the lab's employees had deliberately plotted to conceal future UFO sightings from the Air Force caught me off guard. Apparently, scientific curiosity about a subject of mutual interest trumped national security considerations among the small, tight-knit group. In retrospect, it was probably safe, from a security standpoint, for them to continue privately discussing the mysterious sightings. Although the Soviets could have planted a spy among the men—a not-unheard-of occurrence, given the espionage at Los Alamos during World War II—such an infiltration was probably not very likely and, anyway, Burgess and the others were themselves guessing about what UFOs were, and why they might be sighted around nuclear weapons sites. As such, the intelligence value of their discussions would have been minimal.

Regardless, according to Burgess, a far more dramatic incident involving Sandia Laboratory personnel occurred just a few years later—sometime in the

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late 1950s, as best as he could reconstruct it. During my second interview with him, he said that one evening, while at home, he had been unexpectedly paid a visit by a colleague, David Middleton, who told him a really startling tale. Middleton had just returned from the Nevada Proving Ground (later renamed the Nevada Test Site) where he had been a member of a team of weapons specialists sent there to monitor the detonation of a tower-mounted atomic device.

Throughout the 1950s, the proving ground was utilized by the military to conduct a seemingly endless series of test explosions, designed to gauge yields, radiation levels, optimum destructive power, and other atomic bomb-related effects. These trials were conducted in the atmosphere until 1962, when they were finally abandoned the following year under the terms of the Limited Test Ban Treaty. Subsequently, all nuclear testing undertaken by both the U.S. and the Soviet Union, as well as other countries, was of devices placed underground.

But the test ban had not yet taken place when David Middleton visited Howard Burgess at home that night. He told Burgess he had witnessed a nearly inconceivable event: A few hours prior to the test, he and several other technical personnel had observed two silver-colored, disc-shaped craft racing across the sky. Seconds later, the UFOs swooped down and began to maneuver near the detonation tower. As the assembled team watched in shocked disbelief, the objects actually flew “tight circles” around the tower before zooming off at high velocity. According to Middleton, the test was immediately postponed by the senior Atomic Energy Commission personnel who were present.

The day after Burgess was told of this incident, Middleton paid him another unexpected visit, this time at his office. Earlier that morning, Middleton and the entire Sandia Laboratory team which had witnessed the UFO incident were debriefed and sworn to secrecy about it. Burgess told me that Middleton had nervously pleaded with him to never repeat the conversation of the previous evening. Burgess honored that request until he finally told me the story, some thirty years later.

At the end of the interview, Burgess said that David Middleton was deceased and, therefore, obviously unavailable for comment about the

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incident. Over the years, I have attempted to locate other individuals who were present for the event described by Middleton, without success.

Howard Burgess died in May 2001. A few days before his death, his wife Lovola visited him in the hospital and, at my request, read the contents of this chapter to him. She later told me, “Howard was very eager to hear what you had written. He said that all of it was completely accurate. I also read aloud the other chapters you sent him [regarding other UFO sightings at the Nevada Proving Ground during the 1950s]. He was very eager to hear about those too.” In the next chapter I will discuss some of those sightings—a few of them were spectacular. For the moment, I will only say it appears that Dave Middleton’s dramatic experience at the test site was not unique.

Some years after I first interviewed Howard Burgess, I had the opportunity to speak with another retired nuclear weapons insider living in Albuquerque, Chester “Chet” W. Lytle Sr., who eventually filled in a few more blanks for me. One afternoon in 1998, over a two-hour period, Lytle discussed his knowledge of various Cold War-era UFO incidents which strongly suggested, if not affirmed, an ongoing interest by those who piloted the craft, in the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

During World War II, Lytle had provided engineering support to the seminal Manhattan Project, which produced the first atomic bomb. His company, Lytle Engineering, was secretly contracted by the U.S. Army to design and manufacture the explosive “lenses” used on the tower-mounted device detonated near Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945. The disc-shaped lenses uniformly focused a conventional high explosive blast inward, thereby crushing together the two halves of the bomb’s plutonium core into a single “critical mass and triggering a nuclear chain-reaction. (Lytle once brought an unused lens—a historic souvenir from the birth of the Nuclear Age—to a group dinner I attended, passing it around to the fascination of everyone present.)

In any case, after the war, Lytle's company continued to manufacture various components for nuclear weapons. He had also worked for the Atomic Energy Commission as a specialist in weapons stockpiling. Moreover, his company was involved with a number of other highly- classified military R&D projects, ranging from radar development to aircraft autopilot design.

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On one occasion, in the early 1960s, Lytle had a classified contract with the CIA to fabricate underwater munitions- storage lockers intended for use by the anti-Castro Cuban guerrillas who were being secretly supported by the U.S. government.

Because of these diverse, highly-sensitive activities over the years, Lytle held—at one time or another—Top Secret clearances with several government departments and agencies, including the Atomic Energy Commission, the Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency.

In January 1990, I was introduced to Lytle by UFO researcher Kevin Randle and his associate at the time, Donald Schmitt, during one of their many visits to New Mexico to investigate the now famous Roswell Incident. Over dinner, Lytle unexpectedly and cryptically remarked to me that he had both direct and indirect knowledge of certain nuclear weapons-related UFO sightings. However, when I asked if he would consent to be interviewed about those incidents, he quickly declined, saying that he was reluctant to jeopardize ongoing relationships which his company, now called Communications Diversified Incorporated, had with various departments of the U.S. government.

There the matter rested for several years. Between 1990 and 1996, I had dinner with Lytle three or four times, always in the company of Randle and, sometimes, Schmitt. On each occasion, I politely asked Lytle if he would be willing to speak with me at length about his UFO-related experiences. Each time, he politely but firmly declined to be interviewed. In September 1998—realizing that I would not have forever to pursue the matter, given Lytle’s advanced age—I doggedly called him at his office. Much to my surprise, he actually answered a few of my questions over the phone, so I quickly pressed him to grant me a full-length interview. After a few seconds of silence, he hesitantly agreed.

As I was ushered into Lytle's spacious company office, I noted several plaques on the walls. Each had been presented to bis company by one U.S. government group or another, commemorating some aspect of its distinguished, decades-long service to the nation’s defense establishment.

After a few pleasantries, I clipped a small microphone onto Lytle’s tie and

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began to ask him questions about his knowledge of nuclear weapons- related UFO incidents. As soon as he began speaking, I knew that my frustrating, drawn-out efforts to persuade him to go on-the-record had been worth the wait. Over the next two hours, he divulged some of the most intriguing information I had ever heard.

Despite his age—he was 86 at the time—Lytle articulately discussed his own dramatic UFO sighting at Kirtland AFB, decades earlier, while he was observing an atomic weapon being loaded onto a U.S. Air Force bomber. He then summarized his indirect knowledge of other UFO sightings at the Nevada Proving Ground, during which the pilots of aircraft tasked with shooting motion pictures of various atomic bomb tests had observed highly maneuverable, disc-shaped craft in the vicinity of the detonations. Lytle then spoke of being present during the radar tracking of UFOs at the White Sands Proving Ground, when the unknown objects flew at speeds far beyond the fastest jet, and performed maneuvers that would have destroyed any conventional aircraft.

Last but not least, Lytle unexpectedly revealed a potentially significant conversation he had had in February 1953, with the former base commander of Roswell Army Air Field, William Blanchard—who was by then an Air Force general—regarding the UFO crash/retrieval which allegedly occurred near the base in July 1947.I will discuss those intriguing comments in a later chapter.

At my prompting, Lytle began by discussing his personal UFO sighting at Kirtland AFB. Lytle candidly admitted that he was unable to remember the exact year the incident had taken place, saying only that it had been "sometime in the 1950s." In any event, he and another individual had been observing the loading of an atomic bomb onto an Air Force bomber—either a B-36 or a B-47, Lytle couldn't remember which—when the UFO sighting occurred. The first B-36—which was the last propeller-driven strategic bomber produced in the U.S.—arrived at Kirtland in September 1948, followed by the first B-47 jet bomber three months later. Therefore, if the bomb-loading incident occurred sometime in the 1950s, either type of aircraft could have been involved.

Regardless, Lytle's companion that night was a career U.S. Army officer,

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Kenner F. Hertford. Between 1948 and 1952, Hertford had served as the Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, located at Sandia Base. Following that assignment, he worked for the Atomic Energy Commission, serving as Chief of Research and Development, as well as a member of the Military Liaison Committee, which kept security-cleared congressmen abreast of developments related to atomic weapons. After his retirement from the army in 1955, at the rank of Major General, Hertford worked for nine years as manager of the Atomic Energy Commission's Operations Office in Albuquerque. Because Lytle could not remember the exact year of the UFO sighting at Kirtland, it is unclear which of those positions Hereford held at the time of the sighting.

In any event, as the two men watched the atomic weapon being slowly jacked-up into the aircraft's bomb-bay, they gradually became aware of three lights hovering in the southeastern sky, some distance away, in the direction of the Manzano mountains. Lytle described the lights as "star- like but much brighter." After a few moments, Lytle began commenting on the lights, specifically noting their unusual appearance. Hereford then walked into a nearby building and, unable to find a pair of binoculars, returned with a small technical telescope called a theodolite. After peering at one of the lights for a few seconds, Hertford abruptly handed the theodolite to Lytle and hurried back into the building, saying that he had to make a phone call. Now very curious, Chet squinted into the scope and, to his astonishment, saw a "silver, disc-shaped object with a central dome structure." He quickly trained the theodolite on a second object but, at that moment, all three raced away at high speed in a southerly direction.

A short time later, Hertford returned and told Lytle that the incident should be considered Top Secret and ordered him not to mention it to anyone. Chet never learned whom Hereford had called, or whether an investigation of the incident ever took place. The two men did not discuss it again. While Lytle was never debriefed about the sighting, nor given any details about it, his distinct impression was that whomever had been aboard the UFOs had probably been observing the atomic bomb-loading operation.

Unfortunately, Hertford, who also lived in Albuquerque, died in 1995, some three years before Lytle agreed to be interviewed by me. Consequently, I did not have an opportunity to speak with him about the events at Kirtland

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AFB, on that memorable night so many years ago.

Nevertheless, the UFO sighting described by Lytle is similar to another intriguing incident which took place at Kirtland during that era, one that was officially documented by the Air Force. On the evening of November 4, 1957, a UFO suddenly appeared and began maneuvering erratically above the base's runways and taxiways.

According to the declassified Project Blue Book file on this case, at 10:45 p.m. local, the egg-shaped object—which was initially tracked on radar—descended at a steep angle at 150-200 mph, before leveling-off some 20-30 feet above the ground. Civil Aviation Administration air traffic controllers R. M. Kaser and E. G. Brink watched in disbelief as the UFO moved in an easterly direction, directly toward the nuclear Weapons Storage Area (WSA) and adjacent facilities in Area D, operated by the Air Force's 4925th Test Group (Atomic). It then flew on to a position near the nuclear-capable B-58 bomber maintenance area, and hovered there briefly. Finally, the UFO moved horizontally to the east before suddenly ascending at a high rate of climb and leaving the immediate vicinity. Moments later, it was observed tailing an aircraft south of the base, before moving away altogether.[36]

Almost unbelievably, Project Blue Book dismissed the UFO as an off-course private aircraft. Skeptical of this official explanation, physicist and UFO researcher Dr. James E. McDonald contacted the two air traffic controllers in 1969, to find out whether they agreed with it. In his own report on the case, McDonald noted that "the object was so unlike an aircraft and exhibited performance characteristics so unlike those of any aircraft flying then or now that the 'private aircraft' explanation was quite amusing [to each of the controllers]."[37]

In any case, the UFO sighting during the atomic bomb-loading operation was not the only incident mentioned by Lytle. Later in our interview, he told me he had been informed that other sightings were reported by employees of EG&G Corporation, the civilian company contracted by the U.S. government to shoot motion picture films of its atomic and thermonuclear weapons tests in Nevada and the Pacific.

"Some of our [photographic aircraft] pilots saw UFOs while we were firing [off atomic weapons] in the desert of Nevada, but they couldn't talk about it,"

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Lytle said. This statement appears to corroborate, in a general way, comments made by Dave Middleton of Sandia Laboratory, regarding UFOs having been observed during at least one atomic bomb test at the Nevada Proving Ground, in the late 1950s.

I attempted to coax details about the airborne UFO sightings from Lytle, without success. He told me that because so many years had passed, he couldn't remember any details. Nevertheless, as I shall discuss in the next chapter, other sighting witnesses—mostly former military personnel—have reported the presence of UFOs during the atomic weapons testing in Nevada, and some of those reports are referenced in at least one declassified Air Force memorandum.

Interestingly, Lytle's UFO experience at Kirtland AFB was not his only encounter with the phenomenon. Elsewhere in the interview, he told me that he had also been present, on more than one occasion, when UFOs were tracked by the experimental, high-power radar systems being tested at the White Sands Proving Ground, in southern New Mexico, in the early 1950s.

"They were obviously curious about our activities," Lytle said of the mysterious aerial objects, "Some of them were tracked at Mach 3, 4, 5. Then they would just suddenly stop and hang there." (Mach 1—the speed of sound—varies with altitude but is approximately 700 miles per hour. Therefore, a UFO tracked at Mach 5 may have been traveling well over 3,500 mph.)

According to Lytle, those incidents were "very hush-hush" and created quite a stir among the technical personnel at White Sands. It is not difficult to understand why. The fastest operational military jet fighters at that time flew at approximately 600 miles per hour—and none of those aircraft could instantly stop and hover in mid-air. Clearly, the technology utilized by the unknown aerial objects being tracked at White Sands in the 1950s was vastly superior to that possessed by the U.S. or any other country during that era.

Meanwhile, in southern Nevada, UFO activity related to atomic weapons testing was about to commence with an intensity not previously witnessed, as the first of nearly a hundred radioactive clouds began to drift across the American landscape.

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3. Flashing Sky, Killing Wind

The atomic weapons test site first known as the Nevada Proving Ground—later renamed the Nevada Test Site—was established by the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in 1951. Most of the tests occurred some 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas, at a dry lake bed called Yucca Flat, while nearby Indian Springs Air Force Base provided logistical support for the military and civilian personnel engaged in them.

Throughout the 1950s, the U.S. military and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) detonated a series of atomic and small thermonuclear "devices", to test the performance of various weapon designs and other technical aspects, including their optimum killing capacity. Each detonation was euphemistically called a "shot", and those involved with the tests referred to their work as "firing off shots." Some of the devices were dropped by U.S. Air Force bombers, others were mounted on tall towers, and one was fashioned into a projectile fired and from an atomic cannon. Each series of tests was given a name, such as Teapot or Plumbbob, while joint series were dubbed Buster-Jangle, Tumbler-Snapper, and the like. Furthermore, each shot in a given series was also named: Able, Buster, Charlie, Dog, Easy and so on.

Over the last three decades, a handful of reports have gradually come to light regarding UFO activity during some of the tests—independently provided by military veterans and civilian technicians—which appear to generally substantiate the second-hand accounts mentioned to me by Howard Burgess and Chet Lytle.

One such report was investigated by astronomer Walter N. Webb, the retired resident lecturer at Boston's Charles Hayden Planetarium. Webb is also a highly-respected UFO researcher who, for many years, acted as an astronomical consultant for the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) and the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS).

In 1964, while investigating another alleged paranormal case—which turned out to have a prosaic explanation—Webb was introduced to an individual, whom he refers to as "Mr. M.", who mentioned in passing that he had once been involved in a rather spectacular UFO sighting in the early 1950s, while

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serving in the Air Force and on assignment at the Nevada Proving Ground. For a variety of reasons, Webb was not able to follow up on the information until 1981, when he interviewed the source by telephone. Webb has given me permission to quote extensively from his summary of his investigation of the sighting, which follows here:

SQUADRON OF DISCS OVER ATOMIC TEST SITE OCTOBER 30, 1951

...[Mr. M.] thought the observation might have been made in 1951. He was with a group of servicemen at Yucca Flat, and just before a nuclear test was due to go off, they all saw a formation of 18 silvery, rotating, disc-shaped objects, each one with a dome, come down over the test site, hover for [30-seconds to a minute], and then depart, at an angle, vanishing out of sight in seconds…

THE SIGHTING

In 1951 Mr. M. was an Air Force [airman] stationed at Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, Nevada. That same year the Atomic Energy Commission established the Nevada [Proving Ground] and began detonating nuclear devices at Yucca Flat...He recalled that during one of the first tests—perhaps the second or third in a series of seven—he was among those at Nellis who volunteered for sentry duty at the perimeter of the AEC site. When asked if he could pin down the date, he said 'October sticks in my mind' although he couldn't be absolutely certain. The time of the sighting was early morning after sunrise and occurred perhaps 15 or 20 minutes before the detonation.

Armed with these clues, I called the Union of Concerned Scientists in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and spoke to Paul Walker. I had already learned there were 12 nuclear tests in Nevada during 1951 and now wanted to know the dates, times, and code names of each of the tests. Walker not only had that information but also the height of the burst and the yield. His source was the book, The Effects of Nuclear Weapons, edited by Samuel Glasstone and published jointly by the Department of Defense and the AEC in April, 1962.

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There were two series of tests in Nevada during 1951. The first one was called Operation Ranger and consisted of five detonations in January and February. The final seven-shot sequence was Operation Buster-Jangle, in October and November. Three of those tests—Shots Able, Baker, and Charlie —occurred, respectively, on October 22 at 6:00 a.m. PST; the 28th at 7:20 a.m.; and the 30th at 7:00 a.m. Able was a small tower burst at 30 meters (100 feet), yielding less than 0.1 kiloton. Baker and Charlie were air-drops, exploding at 341 and 345 meters (1118 and 1132 feet) above the desert floor with a force of 3.5 and 14 kilotons, respectively. Able was ruled out immediately since the UFO sighting would have had to take place 10 or 15 minutes before sunrise. When I reached Mr. M again on March 5, I asked him if he could remember how soon after sunrise his UFO observation had happened. He replied that it must have been a half-hour or so. Both Baker and Charlie qualified. When I asked the witness about the size of the explosion, he recalled it was between 10 and 20 kilotons. This narrowed down the date to October 30. (Local sunrise on that date, 6:00 a.m.)

Mr. M., who was 19 years old at the time (on November 3), thought his post was several kilometers—perhaps five to six (three to four miles)—east of Ground Zero, which would place the sun at his back. Suddenly, as he glanced at the clear sky in front of him, he perceived three silvery, elliptical objects hovering in the direction of the target zone and at an estimated height of up to 600 meters (a few thousand feet). Time: approximately 6:40-45 a.m., as determined by the known time of the detonation 15 to 20 minutes later. Each object possessed a flat bottom and a dome on top. No other features were visible. The UFOs were arranged in a horizontal triangle, with one object positioned in front toward the observer and the others in back to either side. The analogy Mr. M. used was 'like looking down a bowling alley at ten-pins. Tire UFOs were shiny and reflected the early morning sunlight. No sound could be detected from that distance.

The prime witness and another guard, who also saw the objects, turned to get the attention of the [Sergeant] of the Guard. When the latter arrived, Mr. M. noticed an armada of other discs had joined the original trio. They were all

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arranged in about six groups of three stretched out in a horizontal row. Apparently, none of the three witnesses saw the huge formation arrive. Mr. M. remembers he had time to count a total of 18 discs.

After perhaps '30 seconds to a minute' (total observation time), the entire UFO formation abruptly departed upward at an angle and vanished in seconds. The [Sergeant] of the Guard said something like 'If we're smart, we won't say anything about this.' Mr. M. never heard any mention of the sighting again. No conventional aircraft appeared on the scene to pursue the UFOs since aircraft weren't permitted over the test area (he doesn't recall seeing or hearing the aircraft that dropped the nuclear device 15 to 20 minutes later). However, the witness believes the UFOs' presence undoubtedly was recorded somewhere. The objects themselves, he feels, must have been monitoring the test. He hinted that, as a consequence of his sighting, he believes UFOs are of extraterrestrial origin…

EVALUATION

When I first heard Mr. Ms story 16 years ago, I must admit I was dubious...1 would describe the witness as 'reluctantly cooperative.' During our telephone conversations, I was impressed by a number of things. Without any prompting from me, Mr. M. immediately referred to ' 18' as the number of UFOs he claimed he had seen during the '51 sighting—the precise figure he gave me 16 years ago…

The witness had more than simply a passing knowledge of events at the AEC Nevada [Proving Ground] in 1951. I was able to eventually pin down the date of the experience using the information he recalled and checked against known dates, times, etc., for the nuclear tests that year. He correctly identified the total number of tests in the fall series of nuclear tests (seven), the test he attended (second or third in the series), the month of his sighting (October), the time (half-hour or so after sunrise and 15 or 20 minutes before the detonation), and yield of the test (between 10 and 20 kilotons). This last bit of in formation was enough to permit selection of the final date since the October 30 test was the only one in the entire series that fit within the

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bracketed lower and upper limits given by the witness; other yields were either much lower or much higher. Thus, while this doesn't necessarily prove Mr. M. had a UFO sighting, it does go a long way toward establishing that he was present at the atomic test site when he said he was.

The appearance and behavior of the UFOs described rule out conventional objects such as aircraft, helicopters, blimps, and balloons. In addition, no such objects would have been permitted over the test site just before the detonation—especially a mass flight!

Thirty years have elapsed since Mr. M.'s observation, and until now he has never reported it officially to anyone. I tend to accept his account of what he said happened in Nevada on that October morning in 1951. Therefore, I believe this sighting should be classified as an unknown.[1]

Walter N. Webb

MUFON Consultant

3/8/81

After learning of this dramatic UFO report, I attempted to locate other individuals who had participated in Operation Buster-Jangle, who might corroborate the account. I sent out a flurry of emails to former members of the U.S. military who had posted messages at various "Atomic Veteran" websites, and to other such veterans who were mentioned on various unrelated websites. As is typical of this type of mass-mailed inquiry, most of those whom I contacted had no knowledge of UFOs being present during the atomic test shots. A few of the veterans even mocked my questions with sarcastic answers. Nevertheless, a handful of individuals wrote back to say that they had indeed seen unusual objects in the sky just before, or during, one detonation or another.

One of them, Bernard Clark, told me, "I participated in the 'Dog' test, Buster-Jangle series, in November 1951. As far as… the test I witnessed, it

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had many unidentified airborne objects flying about. The test was conducted at daybreak. The ground was dark but a few thousand feet above, the sun's rays were being picked up by reflective objects. Depending on the angle of reflection, they could be seen and then disappear."

Obviously, there is not much detail here. I concluded that Clark may have observed the sun glinting off the air-sampling aircraft, the EG&G photographic aircraft, and possibly even the B-50 bomber itself. Most UFOs seen at night are reportedly self-illuminated and, therefore, would not disappear and reappear as they intermittently reflected sunlight while maneuvering. While it is possible that the objects observed by Clark were in fact bona fide UFOs which were not self-illuminated, I remain skeptical.

Regardless, when I sent Clark's email to researcher Daniel Wilson, who has extensively investigated UFO sightings associated with atomic testing in Nevada, he had other important information to share. Wilson replied, "I have examined various sighting reports made during the Buster series of shots, of fireball-like objects that were seen all along the trajectories of radioactive debris clouds after the tests, especially the Dog and Easy shots. Those were reported in many newspapers in Arizona and New Mexico and even in *The New York Times*. I have taken the time to plot out the fireball reports and they matched right up with the trajectories of fallout debris.'

They did indeed. I spent several weeks reviewing Wilson's data and was quite intrigued. As we will see, the apparent correlation between the drifting radioactive clouds and the fireballs is startling, not only during the period of the Buster-Jangle shots, but also following several other atomic bomb tests occurring during the 1950s. On the face of it, it appears as if Dan Wilson has discovered an important but almost completely overlooked aspect to the UFO-Nukes Connection.

(As noted in the last chapter, the so-called "green fireball" objects were repeatedly observed in the skies of New Mexico, beginning in 1947, many of them sighted at or near the Los Alamos and Sandia atomic weapons laboratories. Similar, or perhaps the same phenomena, described green or blue "flashes" and "streaks of light", had been sighted in the sky at Fort Hood/Killeen Base, Texas, where atomic bombs were being stockpiled. At the time, Dr. Lincoln La Paz, a meteor expert at the University of New

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Mexico, had extensively studied the fireballs and ruled-out a natural explanation for them. In fact, declassified Air Force and FBI documents confirm that La Paz had confidentially informed the military and the Atomic Energy Commission that the fireball objects were probably either a top secret U.S. weapon of some sort, or a secret Soviet device sent into American airspace to spy on our atomic weapons program. However, despite La Paz' informed view on the subject, a half-a-century later, no credible evidence exists to support either hypothesis.)

The documents Wilson sent to me, relating to the atomic tests in Nevada, had been declassified by the Defense Special Weapons Agency (DSWA) and the Air Force. Each report contained maps of the trajectories of the radioactive debris clouds after each shot, as measured at different altitudes, plotting their progress as they drifted over certain regions of the U.S. in the days following a given test.

Wilson explained, "Before each series of tests, a Fallout-Monitoring Network of collection stations, at more than 50 locations across the United States, was set up to collect surface debris on trays with a sticky paper on them. The data from this network was used to create maps showing surface distribution of radioactive debris. Isolines were drawn on these maps showing the areas of contamination."

Other radiation sampling, within the wind currents themselves, was conducted by research aircraft provided by the U.S. Air Force's Special Weapons Command, as well as various, deceptively-named "Weather Reconnaissance" squadrons, which actually were tasked with sampling drifting radioactive clouds—both U.S. and Soviet—all over the globe.

Along with the declassified technical reports, Wilson sent numerous newspaper articles about various fireball sightings which had occurred after one atomic bomb test or another, as well as a handful of declassified Project Blue Book reports summarizing a few of the sightings. I have to admit that I was startled by the number of apparent correlations, in case after case, where fireball sightings had taken place—almost without exception—at locations over which the drifting fallout had passed only a few hours or days earlier.

The first series of shots at the Nevada Proving Ground was designated Operation Ranger. On January 28, 1951, at 5:52 a.m. PST, the second test,

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Baker-1, took place. An Air Force B-50 dropped the bomb, which had a relatively modest yield of 8-kilotons, or half that of the Hiroshima bomb which killed some 70,000 Japanese outright. Because the test took place in the western continental United States, the prevailing winds carried the resulting debris cloud eastward across the entire country and out over the Atlantic Ocean. According to the declassified Ranger report, late in the day on January 29th, the trajectory of the radioactive debris cloud, as measured at 30,000-feet altitude, passed over the Albany, New York area at about 5:30 p.m. EST.[2]

The next day, January 30th, at 7:30 p.m. EST—some 26 hours after the radioactive debris rained down—two USAF F-86 pilots flying at 26,000 feet over Albany, New York, observed a 'shp-like' [ship-like? shape-like?] green flare descending at a steep angle. Both pilots, Capt. Howard F. Paulin and 2nd Lt. Lester F. Page, estimated that the flare was at their altitude when first observed and approximately 100 to 200 yards off their left wing. It burned out at about 25,000-feet altitude. Blue Book judged the sighting to be inconclusive, probably due to its brevity, and no connection was made with the green fireballs observed earlier in the Southwest.[3]

Although the incident involving the green "flare" didn't greatly concern the Air Force, by the end of 1951, many other and far more spectacular green fireballs would be sighted all over the U.S.—always shortly after one atomic test or another. Those incidents frequently received national media attention and were taken far more seriously by the military and even top scientists at the Los Alamos nuclear weapons laboratory.

For example, on November 1, 1951, at 7:30 a.m. PST, the 21-kiloton Buster Dog shot took place. For the remainder of the day, wind currents carried the resulting radioactive debris cloud steadily southeast over central and southeastern Arizona and later into southern New Mexico, where more easterly winds caused it to drift into west-central Texas by early evening. Only hours later, the cloud had crossed the entire Lonestar State.[4]

On the morning of November 2nd, some 23 hours after the Buster Dog shot, an amazing display was seen near Abilene, Texas. According to respected UFO researcher Donald Keyhoe, "at 7:15 a.m. [MST], an American Airlines DC-4 on a flight from Los Angeles to Tulsa by the way of Dallas,

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was cruising east of Abilene, Texas, on Airway G-5 at an altitude of 4,500 feet. All of a sudden a bright green object streaked past the airliner at approximately the same altitude and holding the same course. The airline crew judged the object as projectile-shaped and about the same size as the DC-4. The object was leaving a trail behind it. Then as the object raced ahead of the airliner, this strange green fireball exploded, shooting red balls of fire in all directions."[5]

Dan Wilson notes, "One of the declassified documents on the Buster Dog test shows a large, elongated area of radioactive debris at 10,000- feet altitude over much of central and northeastern Texas on November 2, 1951." Moreover, according to the same report, Abilene—where the airborne fireball sighting occurred—had been almost directly beneath the path of the radioactivity drifting at 40,000-feet altitude.[6]

But the strange aerial show was just beginning. On November 3rd, *The Arizona Daily Star*, ran an article titled, "Eerie Blue Flash Streaks Across Southwestern Skies", saying that the "flash" had been seen in Arizona the previous evening, at 9:05 p.m. MST, or some 37 hours after the Buster Dog shot.[7]

Another newspaper, the *New Mexican*, published in Santa Fe, said that reports of the "bluish-green flash" had come in from around the state, as well as from Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and California. Capital Airways pilot H.R. DeHoney, who was flying at 1,000-feet some 20 miles south of Flagstaff, Arizona, said that as the object streaked by, it appeared as "a bright blue-green ball, almost a perfect sphere, which left a long train of brilliant red fire."[8]

The *New Mexican* interviewed green fireball expert Lincoln La Paz, who said his best information indicated that the object had traveled from east of Lordsburg, New Mexico, on a west-northwesterly course that took it over Winslow, Arizona. It then apparently exploded over extreme northwest Arizona. Despite this, La Paz said, there had been no reports of an explosion —as is the case when a fireball meteor disintegrates in the atmosphere—and, by all accounts, the fireball object was silent when it disintegrated.

The fireball sightings also garnered national attention. A *LIFE* magazine article, written months later, described the sightings of November 2nd, and

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noted that “countless” other fireballs had been observed previously by “hundreds of pilots, weather observers and atomic scientists... Reports came so thick and fast during 1948 that in 1949 the Air Force established Project Twinkle’ to investigate them...”[9]

Obviously, an unprecedented, inexplicable phenomenon had burst upon the scene, baffling observers and scientists alike. But was the timing of the Buster Dog shot and the appearance of the fireballs in Southwestern skies merely coincidental? It would appear not. An even more dazzling display of fireballs occurred in the wake of the next shot, Buster Easy.

The test occurred on November 5, 1951, at 8:30 a.m. PST, and was notable for the successful detonation of a prototype device that was much smaller and lighter than the plutonium-based bomb exploded over Nagasaki, Japan—even though its yield was higher, at 31-kilotons. The clear implication: smaller, faster aircraft could be used by the U.S. to deliver atomic weapons in future wars.

At the time of the shot, the direction of winds aloft varied significantly at different altitudes, sending the radioactive cloud in several directions. Above 24,000 feet, the debris drifted southeast over Arizona and into southern New Mexico, west Texas and northern Mexico. The next day, November 8th, a series of new fireballs streaked across the skies of—you guessed it—Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico. This spectacular show did not escape the attention of *The New York Times*, whose article, “Southwest's 7 Fireballs in 11 Days Called ‘Without Parallel in History”’ described the display in great detail, noting sightings at Cloverdale and Rodeo, New Mexico; Sierra Blanca, Texas; Tucson, Arizona; Guzman, Mexico; Los Angeles, California.[10]

Dan Wilson says, “With the exception of the sighting at Los Angeles, all of these fireballs were seen in areas where the radioactive debris cloud from the Buster Easy shot moved overhead on November 5th. However, on November 7th, one day before the California fireball, the 10,000 and 18,000 foot [altitude] trajectories from the Buster Easy shot passed over the Los Angeles area.”

But the fireworks were still not over. On November 9th, a fireball was sighted in Iowa and Indiana. As mentioned earlier, at the time of the Buster Easy shot, the direction of winds aloft varied greatly at different altitudes,

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sending the radioactive debris in several different directions. Wilson says, "The 18,000-foot trajectory moved away from the Nevada Proving Ground towards the southwest, curved to the north and then moved eastward, in a giant looping motion. By early evening on November 8th, the trajectory was moving over the state of Iowa. During that night and early the morning of November 9th, it continued across central Iowa, northern Illinois and Lake Michigan, just north of Indiana."

He continued, "On the night of November 9th, at around 10:47 p.m., near Iowa City, Iowa, a large green meteor-like object was seen by several witnesses. At around the same time there were reports of a meteor from Gary and Crown Point, Indiana, right on the shore of Lake Michigan."

The next day, the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* ran an article quoting the head of the astronomy department at the University of Iowa, Dr. C.C. Wylie—who had not actually seen the fireball himself—as saying that the "green object" was a just a natural meteor. The professor said three persons in Iowa City reported seeing the object and its presence had been confirmed by the Civil Aeronautics Administration. The article further said that "a Chicago airport control tower operator, driving near Gary, Indiana, reported seeing a meteor with a tail," and that "two military pilots reported at Sioux City that they had also seen a meteor with a long green tail about the same time Friday, from 15 miles west of Crown Point, Indiana, in the Gary area."[11]

Meanwhile, the mysterious green fireballs were receiving more attention in the national media. The November 19, 1951 issue of *TIME* magazine featured a tongue-in-cheek article titled, "Great Balls of Fire."[12] The writer, who was obviously not privy to the still-classified (and possibly not-yet drawn) maps showing the extensive areas of fallout after the Buster shots, lightheartedly speculated about a link between the recent burst fireballs and atomic tests. The article mentioned that fireball sightings had occurred as far east as New York.

Upon reading the TIME article decades later, Dan Wilson began to search for newspaper stories about the fireball sightings in New York and surrounding areas. He quickly found that the *Troy* [New York] *Record* had reported a fireball late on the afternoon of November 9th, at Middletown, New York. Scores of people had seen a "ball of fire" streaking across the sky

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at high altitude. The fireball was observed over a twenty-mile area from Middletown to Port Jervis, New York..."[13]

Citing information contained in the Atomic Energy Commission's declassified report on Buster-Jangle, Wilson told me, "On November 7th and 8th, heavy radioactive fallout from Buster Easy had accumulated on the surface of the ground over all of New York state and most of New England. The fireball sighting in upstate New York occurred the day after the two-day contamination of the region." Once again, an as yet- unexplained link between the fallout and the fireballs appeared to exist. This was becoming more and more intriguing.

Meanwhile, in Albuquerque, a reporter interviewed Dr. La Paz who said, "There has never been a rate of meteorite fall in history that has been one-fifth as high as the present fall. If that rate should continue, I would suspect the phenomenon is not natural...[they] don't behave like ordinary meteorites at all."[14]

Following the Buster Easy shot, there was a short lull in the testing until November 19th, when Operation Jangle's first detonation. Sugar, occurred at 9:00 a.m. PST. Coincidentally or not, after the last fireball sighting on November 10th, the phenomenon appeared to lay low, with no further reports coming in over the following 10 days. However, on November 20th, at 6:42 p.m. MST, or some 35 hours after the Sugar shot, a new "[vivid] green" fireball was reported at three widely-separated locations: Dodge City, Kansas, and Lubbock and Big Springs, both in Texas. Two Air Force pilots landing at Kirtland AFB, outside Albuquerque, and a Trans World Airline pilot also reported the blazing object.[15]

Summarizing the rash of fireballs in November 1951, Dan Wilson says, "Some researchers imply that the radioactivity itself was producing the green fireballs, possibly as an electrostatic effect. Dr. Lincoln La Paz thought otherwise. He said that the green fireballs move too regularly and too fast to be that type of phenomenon. Besides, the fireballs had been sighted earlier, on a number of occasions, at the Los Alamos and Sandia atomic labs, where no measurable radiation was released, as well as at Killeen Base, in Texas, where the weapons were simply stored. So, it seems that the electrostatic theory doesn't stand up."

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He continues, “And remember, we also have what appears to be a reliable report of the more common disc-shaped UFOs—18 of them—being seen at the Nevada Proving Ground just before the Buster Charlie test was to occur. Considering that report, we can speculate about a UFO link with the fireballs. [Regardless], we can make one statement of fact: the fireball sightings—green or otherwise—occurred in areas that received radioactive debris from Operation Buster. Was this just a coincidence, or a planned occurrence? We simply don't know, so all we can do is to continue to collect data and see if some overwhelmingly convincing pattern emerges. However, in my opinion, it’s clear that the green fireballs are real, probably artificial, and those responsible for them had an agenda of some kind.'

Wilson is not the only to have arrived at that conclusion. In his book *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, the former chief of Project Blue Book, Air Force Captain Edward Ruppelt, wrote of a very interesting group discussion in which he had participated at Los Alamos, early in 1952. He said that some of the scientists and technicians had been informally theorizing about the green fireballs and had proposed a rather startling explanation for the their origin:

I was eating lunch with a group of people at the AEC’s Los Alamos Laboratory,” he wrote, “when one of the group mentioned the mysterious kelly-green balls of fire. The strictly unofficial bull-session-type discussion that followed took up the entire lunch hour and several hours of the afternoon. It was an interesting discussion because these people, all scientists and technicians from the lab, had a few educated guesses as to what they might be. All of them had seen a green fireball, some of them had seen several…

The speculation about what the green fireballs were ran through the usual spectrum of answers, a new type of natural phenomenon, a secret U.S. development, and psychologically-enlarged meteors. When the possibility of the green fireballs being associated with interplanetary vehicles came up, the whole group got serious. They had been doing a lot of thinking about this, they said, and they had a theory.

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The green fireballs, they theorized, could be some type of unmanned test vehicle that was being projected into our atmosphere from a 'spaceship' hovering several hundred miles above the earth. Two years ago I would have been amazed to hear a group of reputable scientists make such a startling statement. Now, however, I took it as a matter of course. I'd heard the same type of statement many times before from equally-qualified groups.

Turn the tables, they said, suppose that we are going to try to go to a far planet. There would be three phases to the trip: out through the earth's atmosphere, through space, and the re-entry into the atmosphere of the planet we're planning to land on...Coming in from outer space, the craft would, for all practical purposes, be similar to a meteorite except that it would be powered and not free falling. You would have myriad problems associated with aerodynamic heating, high aerodynamic loadings, and very probably a host of other problems that no one can now conceive of...The most logical way to overcome this difficulty would be to build our interplanetary vehicle, go to the planet that we were interested in landing on, and hover several hundred miles up. From this altitude we could send instrumented test vehicles down to the planet. If we didn't want the inhabitants of the planet, if it were inhabited, to know what we were doing we could put destruction devices in the test vehicle, or arrange the test so that the test vehicles would just plain burn up at a certain point due to aerodynamic heating.

They continued, each man injecting his ideas.

Maybe the green fireballs are test vehicles—somebody else's. The regular UFO reports might be explained by the fact that the manned vehicles were venturing down to within 100,000 or 200,000 feet of the earth, or to the altitude at which atmosphere re-entry begins to get critical...From the conversations, I assumed that these people didn't think the green fireballs were any kind of a natural phenomenon. Not exactly, they said, but so far the evidence that [indicated] they were a natural phenomenon was vastly outweighed by the evidence that [indicated] they weren't.[16]

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The informal discussion at Los Alamos is of course intriguing. That top nuclear weapons specialists would even consider such a radical idea as extraterrestrial visitors to explain the green fireballs would undoubtedly have shocked most of their scientific peers at the time, probably even today. Although I find somewhat puzzling their naive belief that an advanced extraterrestrial race would be limited to our own space flight-related concepts and abilities, perhaps it's understandable. After all, the chat session took place in 1952; it would be almost six more years before the first man-made satellite, Sputnik, was launched by the Soviets. In the early 1950s, space flight was a new, unproved, exotic proposition. Even the top rocket scientists of that era—which the nuclear weapons experts were not—would have been thinking about interplanetary travel in the most rudimentary terms: the amount of thrust required to leave your own planet, the degree of braking necessary as you entered the alien planet s atmosphere, so that your spaceship didn't burn up, and so on.

In any event, if Ruppelt's revelation about the conversation at Los Alamos is intriguing, it is also ironic. In light of Dan Wilson's research, as well as various declassified documents relating to the UFO-Nukes Connection, it seems arguable, in my view, that the appearance of the green fireballs—as well as the more frequently-sighted disc-shaped UFOs—was a direct result of the work the nuclear scientists themselves were doing at the Los Alamos and Sandia Labs, as well as at the Nevada Proving Ground. While the actual origin and purpose of the fireballs remains unknown, the available data are strongly suggestive of a link with atomic testing.

Indeed, this apparent connection continued throughout the remainder of the 1950s, as one or more green fireballs were observed following numerous other test shots in Nevada. In fact, Dan Wilson has discovered so many accounts of fireball sightings, in areas recently irradiated by one drifting atomic cloud or another, I had to decide how many examples would convincingly substantiate the point. Ultimately, three pages describing other sightings were edited out of this chapter.

That said, I also concluded that a reasonable number of additional cases would have to be included here, to demonstrate that the number of

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correlations was greater than mere statistical chance would permit. Inherent in this choice is a fair amount of repetition. However, in my view, the events now to be discussed are as noteworthy as they are dramatic. As that old rock song says, “There’s somethin’ happening here. What it is ain’t exactly clear...”

Operation Tumbler-Snapper

The next joint series of shots in Nevada was designated Operation Tumbler-Snapper. The first low-yield shot, Able, being detonated on April 1, 1952, at 9:00 a.m. PST. Because wind directions usually vary at different altitudes, the radioactive debris cloud after any given shot almost always exhibited multiple trajectories. According to the declassified Able shot debris cloud maps, the initial trajectory at 16,000-feet altitude passed just north of Lake Mead, Nevada, around 6 p.m., as it traveled due east. Furthermore, due to a somewhat stagnant weather system, the cloud was slow-moving, resulting in heavy radioactive fallout contaminating a roughly circular region encompassing eastern Nevada—including Lake Mead—northwest Arizona, and almost all of Utah.

The next morning, April 2nd, off-duty Air Force Master Sergeant Sheldon Smith, his wife, and a friend, Master Sgt. Lester Gossett, observed a UFO over Lake Mead at 9:00 a.m., or some 15 hours after the radioactive cloud passed over. According to a Project Blue Book report, the apparently large, silver-colored object, hovered over the lake at “extreme altitude” for over an hour. It was described as “a B-36 [bomber] without wings.” In other words, it was cylinder-shaped. Blue Book staffers dismissed the object as being “probably a balloon.”[17]

Wilson notes that the Able debris cloud continued eastward over time. “By late in the day on April 2nd,” he says, “there was an area of radioactive fallout covering a large portion of the central plains states, which was just starting to rain on northern Texas. On April 3rd, the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, in Denton, Texas, featured an article titled, “Meteor or Flying Saucer? Fiery Fast-Moving Object Sighted In Sky Over Texas.” The story

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said that the night before people from Houston to Fort Worth had seen a fiery object traveling south to north around 8:40 p.m. A Pioneer Airlines pilot estimated that the object was moving at an estimated 800 miles per hour, or far slower than a meteor. He described it as some type of rocket."[18]

The next atom bomb test. Tumbler Baker, took place at 9:30 a.m. on April 15, 1952. Two days later, a large formation of the more familiar disc-shaped UFOs was seen flying near the Nevada Proving Ground. The UFOs were observed by an Air Force Technical Sergeant and four civilian workers at Nellis AFB, north of Las Vegas. An *INS* wire-service story said:

Flying Saucers in the area of the Nevada test site, where important new atomic tests are in progress, were reported Thursday. An Air Force technical sergeant and four civilian workers at the Nellis Air Force Base, near Las Vegas, said they saw 18 circular objects flying an easterly course which carried them over or very close to the test site. Those who reported seeing the objects were T/S Orville Lawson, Rudy Toncer, sheet metal shop foreman, and sheet metal shop workers R.K. Van Houtin, Edward Gregory and Charles Ruliffson. The objects went by at 12:05 p.m. Van Houtin saw them first and then called attention of the others to them. The men watched the saucers for about 30 seconds.[19]

This wire service story was carried in many newspapers. In 2004 astronomer Walt Webb sent me the article appearing in *The Salt Lake Tribune* and noted, coincidentally or not, that the number of UFO' sighted—18—was identical to the number reported by "Mr. M." just before the Buster Charlie test, nearly six months earlier. It will be recalled that M.s report to Webb opened this chapter.

On May 1, 1952, the Snapper Dog shot took place at 8:30 a.m. PDT. As noted in the last chapter, four hours after the blast, four disc shaped objects were seen in Albuquerque, cavorting with a flight of twelve bombers above the city.

At about the same time the four discs were observed "playing tag" with the bombers, three large, tumbling, cylinder-shaped UFOs were sighted by Howard Burgess and three co-workers at the Sandia nuclear weapons

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laboratory, located southeast of Albuquerque. Burgess had said that the UFOs had flown directly over Sandia Base, which surrounded the lab.

This spectacular display was soon followed by another fireball sighting just east of Sandia Laboratory. On May 4th and 5th, areas of moderate radioactive fallout from the earlier Dog shot were deposited on the ground in New Mexico and other southwestern states. On May 7th, a light green ball-shaped object was seen falling from the sky, apparently into the Sandia Mountains, east of Albuquerque.[20]

In other words, this particular burst of UFO activity, besides occurring in areas recently irradiated by fallout, was also unfolding—sometimes blatantly and in broad daylight—on the doorstep of the Atomic Energy Commission's premier nuclear weapons design facility, as well as the home of the U.S. Air Force's elite nuclear bomber squadron. It is tempting to speculate that someone or something was trying to send a message of some kind.

If so, the bomb-testers—or more accurately, their superiors in Washington—were undeterred. The Snapper Easy shot took place on May 7, 1952, at 4:15 a.m. Wilson says, "From May 7th through May 9th, a large swath of radioactive debris was moving east across the United States. On May 9th, all of northern Georgia and nearly all of South Carolina were receiving heavy fallout. According to one Project Blue Book report, the next day, between 10:45 and 11:15 p.m., four employees of the DuPont Company working at the Savannah River Plant, in Ellenton, South Carolina, saw eight disc-shaped objects fly over the plant. Savannah River was operated by the Atomic Energy Commission and produced plutonium for U.S. nuclear weapons."

An FBI memorandum relating to this particular sighting was mentioned in Chapter 2, but Wilson adds a new angle to the incident: "Not only did these objects fly directly over a fissile material production plant, but they were seen at a time when radioactive fallout was raining down in the area."

The next Snapper shot, Fox, took place on May 25, 1952, at 4:00 a.m. On May 26th and 27th, a large area of radioactive fallout covered all 0f northern New Mexico, northern Arizona, most of Utah and Colorado and points eastward as far as the Great Lakes. On May 28th, at around 8:40 p.m., one and possibly two green fireballs were observed in the skies of New Mexico. One was half the size of the moon and was seen from eight ground stations

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and five aircraft. Analyzing the reports. Dr. La Paz found that the fireball had fallen near Santa Fe, made no noise, left no trail and descended nearly vertically.[21]

Earlier that day, between 1:45 and 2:40 p.m., two Albuquerque fire department employees saw two “circular” objects, one shiny silver and the other orange or light brown, rapidly performing various maneuvers over the city. This sighting was later mentioned in a Project Blue Book report.[22]

The Fox debris cloud continued on an easterly course and, on May 27th and 28th, the entire state of Wisconsin received radioactive fallout. Dan Wilson has discovered a newspaper article confirming that on May 29th, at Madison, an Air Force weatherman at Truax Field observed a green fireball similar to those reported in New Mexico. He said the ball was bright green and appeared to be moving at a great rate of speed.[23]

Operation Desert Rock

A series of atomic test-related exercises designated Operation Desert Rock was initiated at the Nevada Proving Ground in the fall of 1951. Over the next four years—during Operation Desert Rock II, III, IV, and so on—thousands of U.S. military personnel from all four services were temporarily assigned, on a rotational basis, to the U.S. Army’s Atomic Maneuver Battalion, based at Camp Desert Rock, within the boundaries of the proving ground.

While I am unaware of any declassified document generated at Camp Desert Rock which makes reference to UFO sightings by the troop.' who participated in various military exercises, indirect evidence of sir h sightings has come to light. As I was preparing this chapter, Dan Wilson sent me a declassified Air Intelligence Information Report from Clovis Air Force Base, New Mexico, which references one or more prior, but unspecified sightings during Operation Desert Rock.

Dated 25 July 1952, and written by 2nd Lt. D.M. Sanders—an intelligence officer assigned to the 140th Fighter Bomber Wing—the report summarizes a military UFO sighting in nearby Portales, New Mexico. According to the report, a Captain J.W. Titus, of the 140th Medical Group, had observed two

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"oval-shaped objects" flying in formation at an estimated speed of 400-600 mph. They were silent and left no vapor trails. At one point, they appeared to make an abrupt 80-degree turn and fly on a northerly course. A second, civilian sighting was referenced but not discussed.[24]

For our discussion, the most interesting statement in this report appears on the cover page. It reads, "Unidentified Flying Objects similar to the types reported seen over 'Operation Desert Rock' were observed by an officer of this Wing on 24 July 1952 and by a resident of Portales, New Mexico on 22 July 1952."[25] This intriguing comment, while frustratingly vague, at least indicates a familiarity on the part of Air Force Intelligence with UFO activity at the Nevada Proving Ground.

Given the date of the Clovis AFB report, July 25, 1952, the referenced sighting(s) during Operation Desert Rock had to have occurred in conjunction with the Operation Tumbler-Snapper tests, earlier that spring, and/or during the one of the series of atomic detonations in Nevada, either Operation Ranger or Operation Buster-Jangle, sometime in 1951. Because the word "Operation" not "Camp" Desert Rock was used in the intelligence report, it's likely that the referenced sighting(s) occurred during one or more of the actual exercises—when U.S. Army troops were being marched through the recently-irradiated areas at the test sight—rather than back at the army camp, which was some 30 miles from the actual testing sites.

As noted earlier, a "Mr. M.", interviewed by researcher Walt Webb, reports having observed 18 disc-shaped craft hovering in formation just prior to the Buster Charlie shot, on October 30, 1951. Moreover, according to media accounts, another 18 disc-shaped UFOs were observed flying near or over the Nevada test site on April 16, 1952. Nevertheless, at the present time, there is no verifiable link between either M 's reported UFO sighting, or the one at Nellis AFB some six months later, and the intelligence report later written at Clovis AFB, New Mexico.

Operation Upshot-Knothole

The test series designated Upshot-Knothole took place between March 17

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and June 4, 1953. Eleven low-to-medium yield atomic devices were detonated to further weapons-development aims and to familiarize U.S. military forces with the atomic battlefield. Multiple UFOs were reported following one shot or another, again in areas where radioactive clouds were drifting across the landscape.

For example, the Harry shot took place on May 19, 1953, at 5:05 a.m. PDT. Two of the radioactive debris plumes, as measured at 30,000 and 40,000-feet altitude, traveled southeast and passed over Arizona, almost directly over Prescott. On May 21st, UFOs were sighted by residents of the city. The next day, *The Prescott Evening Courier* led with this headline; "Flying Saucers Return to Prescott, Objects Noted in Formation a Full Hour" The article said:

... Three reliable Prescott residents, one whom previously had scoffed at the stories of Flying Saucers and space ships, were not a bit reluctant Friday to tell of their witnessing the acrobatics of a 'herd' of these air mysteries. The men. Bill Beers, president of the Prescott Sportsmen's Club, Ray Temple, a post-office employee, and O. Ed Olson, told of watching eight disc-like objects in the sky Thursday morning. The three men said that two of the discs remained stationary and seemed to be serving as guard while the six other discs maneuvered around in a manner that could not be duplicated by a plane. The whole sighting lasted about one hour...[26]

Whether the UFOs' presence was related to the drifting debris clouds is uncertain, however, in view of Wilson's research, the timing of the sighting raises questions. In any case, another, far more dramatic UFO report has been associated with the Upshot-Knothole Harry test. If true, its extreme importance is self-evident. The account is offered by a civilian technician. Arthur G. Stancil, who had been engaged in post-shot scientific studies at the Nevada Proving Ground.

Previously known by the pseudonym, "Fritz Werner". Stancil had been temporarily assigned to work on an Air Force contract for the Atomic Energy Commission, and was tasked with evaluating atomic blast effects on various types of buildings erected for the tests. However, according to Stancil, on May 21st, two days after the Harry shot, he was unexpectedly ordered to

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participate in a special, one-day, highly-secret assignment: the scientific analysis of a crashed UFO, which Stancil believes came down near Kingman, Arizona, some 150 miles southeast of the test site. If Stancil is being truthful, he observed the body of alien being, presumably the pilot, near the downed craft.

The controversial topic of crashed UFOs is a subject unto itself and I have chosen not to present Stancil's account here, so that my discussion of UFO and fireball sightings after atomic tests may shortly find closure However, Stancil's sworn affidavit regarding the incident, as well as I synopsis of the investigation of the case by respected researcher Raymond Fowler, may be found online.[27] Moreover, later in the book, I have devoted an entire chapter to the Roswell Incident, and it's connection to nuclear weapons.

Operation Teapot

Operation Teapot was the first series of tests at the newly-renamed Nevada Test Site, and spanned the period from February 18 to May 15, 1955, consisting of 14 detonations of low-to-medium yield atomic fission devices, some mounted on towers, others dropped from bombers. According to nuclearweaponarchive.org, the tests were undertaken "to create light, compact, efficient, and reliable fission explosive systems..."[28]

Meanwhile, mysterious aerial objects continued to observed by those participating in the Teapot shots. One of them, former Air Force Staff Sergeant Fred Foss had been the NCOIC (Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge) of the Base Personnel Equipment Section at Indian Springs AFB, located southeast of the test area. Foss told me, "During test periods, I was under the supervision of an Army Major named Holland who informed me that I was directly under the control of the Atomic Energy Commission. My duties were to billet, provide transportation, and see to the personal needs of VIPs and forward observers. At other times, I resumed my normal duties under the Base Operations Officer, Captain William Penn."

Foss continued, "To the best of my recollection, the Las Vegas newspapers printed numerous reports of UFO sightings during the Operation Teapot tests.

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One evening between shots, I drove into Las Vegas for groceries and, on my return to Indian Springs AFB, I observed what I thought was a UFO. It was not the traditional disc-shaped UFO but a cigar-shaped object which was emitting different colors, such as red and orange, as it traveled in the night sky. The UFO was closer to the base than to Las Vegas. There was no reflective glow in the sky from the city, so it was dark and the object stood out clearly as it headed towards the test range. This object was initially moving in a straight line but then made a few erratic moves that no Air Force plane at the time could possibly perform. Then it was gone."

Predictably, in the days following some of the Operation Teapot shots, several of the mysterious green fireballs were sighted across wide areas of the U.S. over which radioactive debris clouds had drifted just days or even hours earlier.

The Teapot Turk shot occurred on March 7, 1955, at 5:20 a.m. PST. Dan Wilson says, "By March 10th, the debris cloud trajectory, at 10,000-feet altitude, was moving across eastern Iowa, northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Furthermore, an area of heavy radioactive fallout was raining down across southern Iowa and on into most of northern Illinois on March 9th and 10th."

In 1956, astronomer and UFO researcher Morris K. Jessup reported, "On March 11th, [1955] at Clinton, Iowa, at approximately 4:18 p.m., Mr. K. B. Hershire observed a white oval cloud-like object moving very rapidly from west to east at 45,000 to 50,000 feet in altitude. Hershire reported his observation to the police."[29]

Jessup also wrote, "On [the same day], at Madison, Wisconsin, Lawrence Grab reported that he and his son saw a phosphorescent object travel at terrific speed over the city at 7:50 p.m. The object was flying from the southwest to the northeast. 'Before we saw the object,' he said, 'we saw a brilliant flash of light.'… The Ground Observers post atop the Belmont Hotel also reported it had not seen the thing."[30] Wilson notes, "Moderate radioactive fallout was raining down on both Clinton, Iowa, and Madison, Wisconsin, on March 11, 1955, the date of the two reports mentioned by Jessup."

On March 29th, for the first time ever, two different atomic devices were

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detonated on the same day. At 4:55 a.m., the Teapot Apple-1 shot took place; radiation at the 30,000-foot altitude moved east then southeast over northern Arizona, central New Mexico and into north central Texas. The 18,000-foot trajectory moved east, then southeast, over Utah, Colorado eastern New Mexico, and western and southern Texas.

At 10:00 a.m., the Teapot Wasp Prime shot took place; the 30,000-foot trajectory from the blast moved east and then southeast over Utah, New Mexico, and into northern Texas. "For the rest of the day," says Wilson, "a large area of moderate to heavy radioactive fallout was falling on Nevada. Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. In fact, from March 29 through April 3, those states received virtually uninterrupted fallout.

On April 6th, the *Alamogordo Daily News* ran an article titled. "Fireballs Shower On State", which summarized the latest outburst Apparently, three or four fireballs had been reported in New Mexico, in rapid succession, on the previous night. Dr. LaPaz was quoted as saying that heavy shortwave radio and television interference had accompanied their appearance. He noted that the fireballs were reportedly silent and mentioned that no fragments had been found.

But the burst of fireballs was just beginning. On April 6th, the Teapot HA (High Altitude) shot took place. Wilson notes, "The HA test resulted in radioactive debris trajectories at 45,000 and 55,000-feet altitude, moving slightly south of east over Arizona, New Mexico, northern Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas."

On April 8th, at 9:25 p.m., three residents in Albuquerque reported seeing a "blue-green" fireball steak over the city; the sightings were mentioned in at least one local newspaper the next day. One witness, Mrs. Julian C. Wright, "said she was in her yard when she saw the 'clear ball of fire' zoom west across Albuquerque. She said the fireball appeared to drop when it got over the city."[32]

Understandably, this flurry of fireball activity quickly got the attention of the military. In one declassified memorandum, dated April 15, 1955, U.S. Army Colonel M.H. Truly, stationed at Headquarters Fourth Army, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, wrote to the Assistant Chief of Staff G-2, and summarized the fireball activity. "On 8 April 1955," Truly wrote, "reports indicate that the

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'storm' of unknown flying objects that have rained on southern New Mexico and the El Paso, Texas, area began on I April 1955 and ended on 5 April 1955. (Truly had apparently not known of the sighting at Albuquerque on April 8th.)… According to Army and Air Force spokesmen, none of the occurrences could be attributed to artillery fire, rockets, guided missiles or other military activity."[33]

Meanwhile, back at the Nevada Test Site, on the same day this memorandum was written, April 15th, the Teapot MET (Military Effects Test) shot took place. By the following day, the 30,000 and 40,000-ft debris trajectories had passed directly over Iowa, with the 18,000-foot trajectory passing just south of the state, over northern Missouri. Wilson says, "By April 23-24, a large area of radioactive fallout was on the ground over the whole state of Iowa and the surrounding states of Nebraska, parts of Kansas, Missouri, and Illinois. On April 25th, at around 1:00 a.m. a very bright, flashing object lit up the sky in southwestern Iowa and southeastern Nebraska."

Later that day, the *Council Bluffs* [Iowa] Nonpareil, ran the following article:

Residents and motorists on the highways were startled by what appeared to be a meteor flashing overhead early Monday. State Highway Patrolman John Ebert said he was about five miles east of Shenandoah around I a.m. when 'the whole sky up.' He said: 'At first I thought an airliner had dropped a flare and was looking for a place to land. I looked out the windshield and saw a very bright light. It was like looking into an arc-welder. I had to pull off the road until the dots quit jumping before my eyes.'

A local resident reported the light 'blinked on and off with tremendous brilliance' and then seemed to burst into flames and dash toward the earth. Reports from Nebraska indicated the object appeared to hit the earth about three miles east and south of Waverly about 1:30 a.m. One motorist said he was blinded and had to pull off the road. He said the flash was 'ungodly.' However, Waverly police. Nebraska state highway patrol headquarters and Lincoln police officials could shed no light on what the object was or where it hit.[34]

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Operation Plumbbob

To conclude this chapter, I will briefly mention yet another series of weapons tests in Nevada, Operation Plumbbob. Following the Diablo shot, a UFO was tracked on radar at the nearby Las Vegas Air Force Station. Referring to the incident, Dan Wilson says, "One day earlier, on July 15, 1957, a developmental test of a two-stage thermonuclear [bomb] design took place at the Nevada Test Site—the Plumbbob Diablo shot. The radioactive cloud trajectory maps show a debris plume trailing off to the southeast in the direction of Las Vegas. This moved very slowly and was in the Las Vegas area on July 16th." In other words, the UFO was in the same region of Nevada on the day the radioactive cloud drifted over it.

According to the Blue Book report, the UFO appeared on radar the same day, from 1:56 to 1:58 p.m. PST (Blue Book used Standard Time throughout the year). It was tracked by the Air Force's Air Defense Command radar station at Angel Peak, Nevada. One officer and two enlisted men assigned to the 865th ACWRON (Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron)—Senior Director 1st Lt. Clifford E. Pocock, scope operator Airman 2nd Class Walter Lyons, and control technician Airman 1st Class Armand Therrien—were present at the time of the incident.

Using the site's search radar, Lyons tracked the inbound target flying, an average speed of 6,200 mph for 48 seconds. It then "stopped abruptly and "remained stationary" for 12 seconds, about 85 miles ENE of the radar site. The unknown object then resumed flight, traveling outbound at about 7,000 mph for 72 seconds before disappearing at the radars maximum range of 224 miles, near Marble Canyon, Arizona. One other fascinating detail is worth noting: the UFO responded to encrypted military IFF transponder signals and transmitted encrypted responses, although its enormous speed and momentary hovering obviously rule-out the possibility that it was a military aircraft.[35]

The last test I will mention, the Plumbbob Morgan shot, took place on October 7, 1957, at 5 a.m. PST. Wilson says, "For the rest of the day, and

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throughout October 8th, the debris cloud, as measured at 30,000- feet, moved eastward across southern Utah, into southern Colorado, then turned northeast to cross central Colorado, near Denver. The clouds trajectory at 20,000-feet altitude moved northeast over Utah and across northwest Colorado during October 8th. On October 8th and 9th, the debris cloud at 10,000-feet altitude, moved north along the border of Nevada and Utah and into Idaho." Basically, a huge swath of the four-state region had been saturated with radioactive fallout.

"On October 10, 1957, around 4 a.m. MST," notes Wilson, "a huge fireball plunged from the sky near the Utah-Colorado border." According to an *Associated Press* article released later that day, the fiery object just missed a Navy transport plane with 20 persons aboard.[36] The pilot said the fireball crashed on the Utah-Colorado border. Several other pilots also reported seeing a similar object flying parallel with the horizon which then disintegrated in midair.

To summarize Dan Wilson's findings, on numerous occasions during the 1950s, areas of the U.S. where drifting radioactive clouds had passed over also frequently played host to the mysterious green fireballs and/or metallic-appearing, disc or cylinder-shaped UFOs, whose appearance closely followed —both chronologically and geographically—the rain of fallout. Although Wilson is still researching the apparent link between atomic tests and subsequent sighting reports, in my view, the data he has amassed thus far is quite impressive.

To be sure, many questions remain to be answered. For example, why did fireballs and/or UFOs appear after some atomic tests but not others? Or, why did the unidentified aerial objects seem to materialize in areas near a particular radioactive debris trajectory, after one test or another, but were not in evidence near other debris plumes, drifting at different altitudes, over other regions of the U.S.? Obviously, many other questions must be asked as well, and the data require independent, scientific scrutiny and statistical modeling, to establish the validity of the apparent correlation between radioactive fallout and the fireball sightings.

Nevertheless, Dan Wilson has done a remarkable job gathering and analyzing the available evidence. I have encouraged him to publish his

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findings once he believes he has taken his research as far as he can. If the reader is aware of any fireball sightings in the 1950s not discussed here, and would like to contribute to the database, please contact me at the email address listed in Appendix A. I will forward those reports to Wilson.

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4. Meanwhile, out at Sea

In September 1952, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations held their first joint, large-scale naval exercise. Designated Operation Mainbrace, it involved some 200 ships, 1000 aircraft, and over 80,000 military personnel engaged in mock-combat maneuvers in the North Sea, off Denmark and Norway, not far from England's northeast coast.

On September 13th, several members of the crew of the Danish destroyer *Willemoes* sighted an unidentified triangular-shaped object, emitting a bluish glow, flying at an estimated 900 mph. Over the next week, four more UFO sightings were reported by various American, British, and Danish military personnel—both sailors and airmen—who were either participating in the operation, or stationed at bases in the vicinity of the naval task-force.

On September 20th, crewmen and pilots standing on the deck of the aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Franklin D. Roosevelt CV-42* observed a spherical-shaped object flying at high velocity. It was no longer visible after a few seconds, and no order was issued for aircraft to pursue it.

Some two years earlier, the *FDR* had become the first U.S. warship to carry and launch an atomic weapon. On February 7, 1950, in a demonstration of an aircraft carrier's long-range atomic attack capabilities, a Lockheed P2V-3C Neptune took off from the deck of the FDR—with the assistance of JATO [Jet-Assist Take-Off] rockets. The aircraft carried one atomic bomb, of the "Fat Man" type dropped on Nagasaki

By the time of Operation Mainbrace, however, the delivery aircraft aboard U.S. carriers had become the McDonnell F2H-2B Banshee, which was configured to carry two small atomic bombs. Although the navy has never officially commented on the subject, it is almost certain that the FDR carried atomic weapons during Operation Mainbrace.

In his 1956 book, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, former USAF Project Blue Book chief Captain Edward J. Ruppelt described the sightings during the operation:

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In late September 1952 the NATO naval forces had held maneuvers off the coast of Europe; they were called Operation Mainbrace. Before they had started someone in the Pentagon had half-seriously mentioned that Naval Intelligence should keep an eye open for UFOs, but no one really expected the UFOs to show up. Nevertheless, once again the UFOs were their old unpredictable selves—they were there.

On September 20, a U.S. newspaper reporter aboard an aircraft carrier [the FDR] in the North Sea was photographing a carrier take-off in color when he happened to look back down the flight deck and saw a group of pilots and flight deck crew watching something in the sky. He went back to look and there was a silver sphere moving across the sky just behind the fleet of ships. The object appeared to be large, plenty large enough to show up in a photo, so the reporter shot several pictures. They were developed right away and turned out to be excellent. He had gotten the superstructure of the carrier in each one and, judging by the size of the object in each successive photo, one could see that it was moving rapidly.[1]

Ruppelt then described an immediate, rigorous investigation by the Navy to determine whether any of the ships participating in the operation had launched a weather balloon. No evidence of such a launch was found Their interest aroused, Project Blue Book staffers began to closely monitor the unfolding events. Ruppelt wrote,

The day after the photos had been taken six RAF pilots flying a formation of [Meteor] jet fighters over the North Sea saw something coming from the direction of the Mainbrace fleet. It was a shiny, spherical object, and they couldn't recognize it as anything 'friendly' so they took after it. But in a minute or two they lost it. When they neared their base, one of the pilots looked back and saw that the UFO was now following him. He turned but the UFO also turned, and again it outdistanced the Meteor in a matter of minutes.

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Then on the third consecutive day a UFO showed up near the fleet, this time over Topcliffe Aerodrome in England. A pilot in a Meteor was scrambled and managed to get his jet fairly close to the UFO, close enough to see that the object was 'round, silvery, and white' and seemed to 'rotate around its vertical axis and sort of wobble.' But before he could close in to get a really good look it was gone.

It was these sightings, I was told by an RAF exchange intelligence officer in the Pentagon, that caused the RAF to officially recognize the UFO.[2]

Although impressive, the various UFO sightings during Operation Mainbrace cannot, in my view, be categorized as nuclear weapons- related incidents, per se. Even during the brief sighting aboard the U.S.S. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the silver-colored sphere reportedly demonstrated no particular interest in the ship which was, at the time, accompanied by dozens of other vessels. Therefore, it might be argued that the whole task-force. was the actual subject of surveillance.

Indeed, given that the other UFO sightings during Mainbrace were made by military personnel aboard a non-nuclear Danish destroyer, by British pilots flying in the vicinity of the exercises, and at British and Danish air force bases located near the task-force's position in the North Sea, it seems likely that the UFOs' wide-ranging presence was related to the operation as a whole, rather than a specific interest in the American, atomic weapons-capable aircraft carrier taking part in it.

However, a little more than a month later, on the other side of the globe, UFOs were observed by U.S. Navy personnel on at least two occasions during Operation Ivy, which involved the atmospheric testing of atomic and thermonuclear weapons near the Marshall Islands, in the Pacific Ocean. Those sightings, although decades old, have only recently come to light. Nevertheless, their importance is self-evident.

Testing in the Pacific

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While the Nevada Proving Ground could be used to conduct tests of the relatively low-yield atomic bombs, detonating the next generation of weapons—the unbelievably massive hydrogen bombs—was out of the question. For those tests, a far more isolated site would have to be utilized, where the horrendous blast effects and widely-strewn clouds of radioactive fallout could drift thousands of miles on the wind without impacting areas of high-density human habitation. From the U.S. military's point of view, the ideal location would be a handful of coral atolls in the Marshall Islands, in the western Pacific Ocean, where three smaller, atomic test series—Operations Crossroads, Sandstone, and Greenhouse—had taken place in 1946, 1948 and 1951, respectively.

At present, I am unaware of any reports of UFOs being observed during these early tests and there are, to my knowledge, no references to such sightings in declassified documents or the ufological literature. One U.S. Navy veteran who participated in Crossroads, then Seaman 3rd Class Leon Haubenstein, told me, "I haven't any knowledge of UFOs at Bikini or Kwajalein. I was involved in the Crossroads operation as a signalman and would have read about them as I saw all messages sent to report such news. Most messages were in plain English, and the coded messages were mostly related to officer transfers. I'm sure I would have heard of any UFOs, considering how long I was involved with Crossroads. Seamen would often talk to each other by blinker light and word would have gotten around pretty quickly if there were any reports of sightings."

Another Navy veteran, Frank Potts, participated the next test series, Sandstone. He told me, "As a weather observer, I did spend considerable time looking skyward, although I never saw what may be called a UFO. I should emphasize that during each Operation Sandstone blast, I was on an open deck holding a high speed [atmospheric] pressure recorder. I was equipped with very dark glasses and we were advised to look away for the first few seconds following each blast. From that point onward though, my eyes were following the spectacular view of the mushrooming cloud as it made it's journey skyward. Other than that, I saw nothing that looked the least bit unusual in the morning sky. Nor did I see anything prior to each blast while it was still nighttime black outside. So, if there were UFOs in that area, I sure didn't see them and I'm certain if anyone else- had seen anything I would

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have heard about it."

Ironically, at the time of the tests, the Marshall group was a U s protectorate, ostensibly for its own security, given that some of the atolls had been taken over by the Japanese in World War II. Therefore, the displaced islanders had little choice but to bend to the will of those intent on detonating bombs. Sadly, despite sincere assurances and genuine effort' to move them to what were presumed to be safe locations on other islands farther from ground zero, a whole new group of "downwinders" was about to suffer the same fate as those American citizens living near the Nevada test site. Over time, the radioactive rain from one test or another still managed to reach them in their temporary homes. Consequently, some populations of islanders would later experience the same elevated rates of cancers experienced by those living in southern Utah. One 1999 study referred to the 67 nuclear tests in the Marshalls and stated that "increases in leukemia, breast cancer and thyroid cancer after radiation exposure have been well established, especially in childhood exposures."[3]

But, as in Nevada, "minimal" collateral human damage was deemed acceptable in the name of national security and the bomb testing went forward at breakneck speed. Operation Ivy, conducted at the Pacific Proving Ground in late 1952, was as historic as it was ominous. The most momentous event during the series of shots was the detonation, on November 1, 1952, of the first megaton-range hydrogen device, code-named "Mike", which had a yield of 10.4 megatons, equivalent to exploding 10.4 million tons of TNT. In other words, the blast was some 650 times as powerful as the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The resulting nuclear fireball alone measured three miles in diameter, and was itself surrounded by an enormously larger blast area. Stunned military observers, aboard U.S. Navy vessels anchored outside the danger zone, stood speechless as they stared in awe at the massive mushroom cloud rising into the sky.

With the success of the Mike shot, the world effectively entered the Thermonuclear Age. From that point forward, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union would strive to produce high-yield hydrogen bombs—eventually tens of thousands of them—for their strategic nuclear arsenals. Had the Cold War standoff erupted into World War 111, with the full fury of those weapons unleashed, human civilization—and perhaps the very survival of our species

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—would have been at risk.

U.S. strategists estimated that an all-out nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union would result in perhaps 200 million dead on both sides. Those not killed outright would be forced to endure the inevitable Nuclear Winter, as a shroud of smoke, soot, and radioactive debris, carried on the winds, soon covered most of the planet. The pall would have blocked sunlight for many months and dramatically cooled the planet for years to come, making large-scale agriculture impossible for an extended period, in addition to mass human starvation, the survival of life forms large and small would be threatened. If it were not the end of the world, it certainly would have seemed like it.

Given these enormous stakes, one might hypothesize that those concerned by the alarming pace of the nuclear arms race—regardless of their identity and origin—would be keenly interested in observing the detonation of the unprecedented hydrogen weapon about to be tested during Operation Ivy. Remarkably, according to former Project Blue Book chief Captain Edward Ruppelt, certain unnamed parties at the Pentagon did indeed speculate about this possibility. In his book, Ruppelt wrote,

… in November or December [1952] the U.S. was going to shoot the first H-bomb during [Operation] Ivy. Although this was Top Secret at the time, it was about the most poorly kept secret in history—everybody seemed to know all about it. Some people in the Pentagon had the idea that there were beings, earthly or otherwise, who might be interested in our activities in the Pacific, as they seemed to be in Operation Mainbrace. Consequently Project Blue Book had been directed to get transportation to the test area to set up a reporting net, brief people on how to report, and analyze their reports on the spot…

Our proposed trip to the Pacific to watch for UFO's during the H-bomb test was canceled at the last minute because we couldn't get space on an airplane. But the crews of Navy and Air Force security forces who did go out to the tests were thoroughly briefed to look for UFOs, and they were given the procedures on how to track and report them. Back at [Project Blue Book]

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we stood by to make quick analysis of any reports that might come in—none came. Nothing that fell into the UFO category was seen during the entire Ivy series of atomic shots.[4]

Although Ruppelt wrote that there were no UFO sightings during Operation Ivy—at least none had been reported to Blue Book—I have interviewed two former sailors, serving on two different ships during the operation, who say otherwise. Their stories have only lately come to light.

Tom Kramer, now employed as an electrical engineer for United Space Alliance, at the Kennedy Space Center, served as a radioman seaman aboard the *U.S.S. Curtiss AV-4* during Operation Ivy. He reports seeing a UFO one night, a few days before the Mike shot.

I interviewed Kramer by telephone in 2005. At the time, I was attempting to locate sailors who had been aboard the Curtiss during another series of nuclear weapons tests, Operation Castle, in 1954, when a UFO sighting was actually recorded in the ship's log. (I will examine that incident later in this chapter.)

I was surprised when Kramer began discussing his sighting during Operation Ivy. Puzzled, I said, "You mean Operation Castle, don't you?" Kramer replied, "No, Operation Ivy. I wasn't serving aboard the *Curtiss* during Castle." Intrigued by this unexpected turn of events, I listened intently.

Kramer told me that, on the night in question—he estimated it was about a week before the Mike device was detonated—a movie had been shown on the ship's fantail, and was attended by many of the crew. After it ended, and almost everyone had gone below, Kramer and some two to three dozen other crewmen were ordered to stow the mess benches used for the screening. Suddenly, he saw a strange object in the sky. Kramer said that it was round, bright white, and made no sound. He said that while he couldn't estimate its actual size, the UFO appeared to him as somewhat smaller than a dime held at arm's length.

"The object was almost motionless when I first saw it," Kramer said, "then it zigged one way for a very short distance, zagged another short distance, then took off like a bat out of hell." He estimated that the entire sighting had

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lasted less than ten seconds.

To state the obvious, no conventional aircraft—either in 1952 or at present—could match the reported zigzag feat. The G-forces generated by such maneuvers would very likely destroy the airplane and kill those on board. Kramer told me that no one had debriefed him, or anyone else he knew, after the incident, even though there had been open discussion of the sighting among at least some of the crew.

After interviewing Kramer, I included a brief mention of his account in an article I was writing for the *U.S.S. Curtiss* Association's April 2005 newsletter, regarding the documented UFO sighting aboard the ship, in April 1954, during Operation Castle. Although it was a long-shot, I had hoped that other former crewmen who had served aboard the Curtiss during Operation Ivy would come forward and substantiate Kramer's account. Unfortunately, none did. I later learned that only a few members of the *Curtiss* Association had actually served aboard the ship during the 1952 operation. So I filed Kramer's report away with the intention of pursuing the question of UFO sightings during Ivy at some future date, and moved on to other cases I was investigating.

Two years later, in March 2007, another former U.S. Navy sailor, Abelardo "Abe" Marquez, posted a message at the Atomic Veterans History Project website, saying that he had seen a UFO in the fall of 1952, while serving aboard the U.S.S. Fletcher DD-445 during Operation Ivy. After this hoped-for development was brought to my attention, I immediately contacted Marquez and asked if I might interview him. He readily agreed and told me,

At the time of the sighting, I was a seaman apprentice. I had come aboard the Fletcher in July of that year [1952] and I was just getting familiar with the ship. I was part of the deck crew and they started me out as a deck hand. That particular night, I was a lookout. My duty started at 3:45 a.m. but they wake you up at 3:30.

My compartment was on the fantail—the tail of the ship. Anyway, they woke me up and I was on my way to the bridge when I noticed that the ship was going really fast. Full speed, it seemed like. You could hear the engines really

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turning. I had been on board long enough to know what cruising speed felt like, or when we went slower or faster.

When I walked up the deck on the port side, the port quarter, I saw two people standing there. They had just been let off duty. I think they were firemen, or worked in the engine room, or something. They weren't deck hands. So I asked them, 'What's going on? Why are we going really fast? Did we pick up a sonar contact?' A few days before, we had a submarine sonar contact. Probably a Soviet sub that was following the task-force. We never did find it. Anyway, I thought we might be going at full speed to intercept a submarine or something.

But these two guys said, 'No, it's that light up in the sky,' and they started pointing at it. At first, I couldn't see it, but then it got larger. When I first saw it, it was like a bright star, but it wasn't twinkling like a star. I watched it for a little while. It looked like a little white round ball coming straight down, vertical. As it came down, it got larger and looked more and more like a round white light. But I had to go to my station or I would be late, so I left those guys.

I went up on the bridge and went on duty. When I relieved the watch, someone told me to keep an eye on the light. It was still coming down, getting bigger and bigger. You know, just a round white light. But it was bright, real bright! All of a sudden, it stopped. That got my attention! It was just hanging there. By the time it stopped, it was pretty big!

I interrupted Marquez and asked about the apparent size of the object. For comparison, I told him to imagine holding a quarter at arm's length. After a moment he said, "I think a quarter held like that would have covered the light." I then said, "Would the object have been closer to the size of a dime held at arm's-length?" Marquez paused for a few seconds then replied, "Yeah, I think it was about that size, or a little larger. Not the size of a full moon, but pretty close." Then he continued,

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The captain, Captain Rawlings, was already there on the bridge, in the pilot house, in a bathrobe. Apparently, he had been woken up by someone on duty, so that he could look at the light. It was time to change the watch so there were four other officers on the bridge—the two officers on duty and the two who were relieving them. The door to the pilot house was maybe six-feet, eight- feet, something like that, from the lookout's position. I could hear the captain and the other officers through the doorway. They were talking among themselves about the light. They didn't know what it was. I heard someone say that there was no radar contact…

We had two lookouts on the port side and two on the starboard side. I was on the port side. You know, out on the wing, on the left side of the bridge—me and another lookout. I was looking at the light. It was still hanging there in the sky, still off the port side. It was 40, maybe 45-degrees above the horizon. It was a perfect night—the sky was clear, no clouds of any kind. The sea had a little chop—it wasn't a dead sea, like a mirror, but it wasn't rough either. There was some wind, I think because we were going so fast.

By that time I had those big binoculars that are kept on the bridge. I tried to look at the light. But because we were going full speed, the ship was pitching up and down so I couldn't get the object in the binoculars' [field of view]. So I just looked at it with the smaller binoculars I had around my neck. I could hold those on the object but I still couldn't make out any details. It was just a round white light. It had no tail lights, no [jet engine] flame, no nothing. I didn't see a metal craft, just a round light. I don't know how far it was from the ship, maybe a half- mile or a mile. Something like that. It was hard to tell. But it wasn't real close, like a few hundred yards.

Whatever it was, it looked like it was pacing the ship. We were moving forward but it stayed in the same place [in relation to the ship]. Do you know about relative bearings? When were out at sea we used relative bearings. The bow of the ship is 0-degrees, the stern is 180-degrees. Well, the light was at, oh I would say, 210 or 220 relative bearing. 220-degrees is off the port side

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and toward the stern. It didn't seem to change its position—it didn't move ahead or fall behind as the ship moved forward. It wasn't chasing us, you know, getting closer, or anything like that. But I had the feeling that the light was looking at the ship. I definitely had that feeling.

Then, after about four or five minutes, all of a sudden it took off, straight up, at about the same speed it had descended, getting smaller and smaller. Pretty soon it was so small you couldn't see it any more. All you saw was stars. So, you know, the light came straight down, stopped for awhile, then went straight up—like a yo-yo. It was like a spider, coming straight down [on a silken thread], stopping in mid-air, then going back up. I told the other lookout, 'This is weird.' I had seen meteors come down but I had never seen anything come down and then go back up…

I then asked Marquez to estimate the date of the UFO incident- relative to the detonation of the Mike device. Marquez thought a few moments and replied, "Oh, I would say it was five to seven days before Mike. Something like that." I asked Marquez if he or anyone else was debriefed about the incident. He replied, "No, no. I don't know if the officers on the bridge were debriefed, but my buddy on lookout with me wasn't, and I wasn't." In the message Marquez posted on the Atomic Veterans History Project website, he had written, "Captain Rawlings told the yeoman to log it as a UFO because he couldn't tell what it was." When I asked Marquez about this, he confirmed his statement. However, during a follow-up conversation, he told me, "Well, I've been thinking about it and I'm not really sure what, if anything, was actually put in the log. Everyone on the bridge saw the light, and they were talking about it. Nobody, including the captain, knew what it was. The light was real and it was not a star or a meteor, but I'm not sure what was put in the log. I think something was but I don't know what."

After speaking with Marquez, I located and interviewed the captain of the *U.S.S. Fletcher* at the time of the incident, Captain Grover L. Rawlings (USN Ret.), and asked if had any recollection of the incident. He told me, "I'm sorry to tell you that I have no recollection of that incident whatsoever. I cannot recall any time when I was awoken and called to the bridge to look at

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a UFO." However, Rawlings did not deny that the incident had in fact occurred.

I also contacted retired U.S. Navy Commander Robert McCurley, who had been an ensign aboard the *Fletcher* at the time of the incident. McCurley had earlier told researcher Dan Wilson that there was no mention of a UFO sighting in the ship's log during Operation Ivy—at least in the version of the log he got from the National Archives. McCurley confirmed that omission when I spoke with him.

So, perhaps, for whatever reason, no reference to the UFO was ever recorded. However, there is at least one other possible scenario to consider. As McCurley himself noted in a message he had posted at the Atomic Veterans History Project website, "There is no entry in the *Fletcher's* log of the detonation of the Mike device, probably because the log was of a lesser classification than the operation classification."

In other words, although it cannot determined with certainty, security-related censorship may also account for the absence of any mention of the UFO—which was, after all, observed near a U.S. Navy vessel participating in a series of highly-classified nuclear weapons tests.

Standard naval procedure dictates that the handwritten log entries from each watch be typed-up and the originals destroyed. If a handwritten notation relating to the UFO sighting was in fact entered in the log, it's possible that it was later deleted in the typed copy of the log prepared at the end of that day. Given the potential sensitivity of the situation, this scenario seems at least plausible if not provable.

Regardless, Marquez concluded his remarks to me by saying, "Even though only a few people saw the light at that time of night, the officers on the bridge were looking at it, and they were discussing it. Because it was the change of the watch, with people coming up to relieve the ones already on duty—the officers, the yeoman, and the lookouts—there were several people who saw the light. I don't know if anyone from [the Combat Information Center] came out and looked at it. They work in a dark room with the radars. But we also had two men on the K-guns—the depth-charge guns—who might have seen the light."

Because neither Abe Marquez nor Tom Kramer can remember the exact

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date of their respective sightings during Operation Ivy, it's simply not possible to say that they observed the same object on the same night. However, each witness described a round white object, silent and capable of hovering, and each estimated that their sighting had occurred about a week before the all-important Mike shot.

Another former sailor, Armando "Mike" Ramos, who served aboard the *U.S.S. Estes AGC-12* during Operation Ivy, recently told me, "I had heard that there may have been UFOs sighted [during Ivy], During the waiting periods between the tests, we utilized a recreation area known as Camp Blandy, which was also used by the other ships in our task group unit. [While there,] we heard rumors of strange lights in the test area, but I thought [the other sailors] were just seeing the many variations of light caused by the blasts and disregarded the [reports of UFO] sightings."

One piece of potentially relevant information pertaining to Operation Ivy, brought to my attention by Dan Wilson, is contained in a declassified document entitled, Commander Task Group 132.3 History of Operation Ivy. At the time it was written, each page of the document had been stamped, "SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION". On page 95, it states that wide-ranging air security patrols around the Mike detonation site commenced on September 16th, some six weeks before the shot The patrols were designed to detect and intercept any Soviet aircraft or ships which might be monitoring the operation, as well as to wave-off any wayward vessels, Soviet or otherwise, if they inadvertently entered the danger-zone.

On the next page, there is this very interesting statement: "The air security patrols have reported numerous radar contacts which subsequently could not be seen visually. The cause of these contacts was assumed to be either weather or ionized clouds." 5Perhaps these unidentified radar returns were indeed weather-related or, perhaps, some of them were something else. In any case, less than two years later, during Operation Castle, one uninvited visitor was quite visible, making a spectacular appearance at low altitude directly above one of the key ships in the task force, just hours before another hydrogen bomb test.

But first, for a little comic relief, I mention the following: Some three weeks after the Mike shot, during Operation Ivy, in November 1952, a

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notorious UFO "contactee" of the 1950s-era, George Adamski, claimed that aliens had given him a message for mankind, regarding the perils of nuclear testing. Adamski claimed that while in the California desert, he had met a with a man from Venus, Orthon, who told him, "The friendly Venusians are concerned about the build-up of radioactivity in the Earth's atmosphere. They feel the radiation from the U.S. and Russian atomic tests is a danger to our planet."

While a relative few hung on Adamski's every word, the national media hooted and cackled, understandably so, and most Americans just shook their heads. I will not go into all of the evidence substantiating the fraudulent nature of Adamski's many claims over the years—or the actual, scientifically-verified environmental conditions on Venus which all but preclude any intelligent species ever having evolved there—and simply note that these kinds of wild, unsubstantiated tales unfortunately clouded public perceptions about "flying saucers" in the 1950s, and even later. Of course, in those years, the credible data—the real story—had been more or less successfully hidden by the U.S. military, and it would be decades before the documents confirming the actual, ongoing interest in nuclear testing by those piloting the UFOs was declassified.

A Thousand Times

Operation Castle—a series of six, mostly high-yield thermonuclear weapon tests—took place at the Pacific Proving Ground between March 1st and May 14th, 1954. The most notable event occurred on March 1st, when the Bravo shot unintentionally became the largest hydrogen device ever exploded by the United States. Due to a scientific miscalculation, the detonation unexpectedly yielded 15 megatons—the equivalent of 15 million tons of TNT—thus making it a thousand times as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

This was roughly two-and-one-half times the predicted yield, and the error placed U.S. military and civilian personnel monitoring the test in harm's way. In fact, the miscalculation resulted in the single worst incident of accidental fallout exposure during the entire U.S. atmospheric testing program. Acute

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radiation exposure was diagnosed in many observers of the blast, as well as among the crew of a Japanese fishing boat 90 miles away, and Marshall Islanders living on Rongelap Atoll, 100 miles downwind from the blast.

In 1975, in a report titled, *Worldwide Effects of Nuclear War—Some Perspectives*, the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency acknowledged the adverse health effects resulting from the Bravo blast and commented on their implications should an all-out nuclear war ever occur: "More than any other event in the decade of testing large nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, Castle/Bravo's unexpected contamination of 7,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean dramatically illustrated how' large- scale nuclear war could produce casualties on a colossal scale, far beyond the local effects of blast and fire alone."[6]

Other detonations during Operation Castle also greatly exceeded expected yields. Consequently, the three most powerful hydrogen devices ever exploded by the U.S. occurred during this series of tests. (After the Bravo test, the Soviet's bomb program chief, Igor Kurchatov wrote a secret report to the Soviet government warning that 100 such blasts would end life on earth and destroy the ecosystem. The Soviet government shelved the report and continued to develop equally powerful hydrogen bombs.[7]) In 1998, Patricia Broudy, the Legislative Director of the National Association of Atomic Veterans, accidentally discovered a reference to a dramatic UFO sighting which had occurred during Castle, embedded in a military report containing over five hundred pages of material relating to operational maneuvers and logistics. At the time, Broudy was doing research for a legal case on behalf of an atomic widow whose husband had died from an illness attributed to his exposure to radiation during the operation. The UFO sighting record had apparently escaped tin' attention of government censors and, therefore, found its way into the public domain when the entire document was declassified. As we will see, apparently that error was later rectified in a most mysterious manner and the UFO sighting report is no longer available to the those searching government archives.

In any event, the record of the incident originally appeared in a transcribed ship's deck log—within a Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) report titled, *CASTLE SERIES, 1954, DNA 6035F, United States Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Tests*—which was declassified in 1982. UFO researcher Daniel

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Wilson independently found the reference to the UFO sighting in 2000. He told me, “I was doing research into the nuclear weapons testing just to learn more about what had happened and how it might relate to UFO sightings. Lo and behold, I came across [the sighting report on] page 341. Wow! I could not believe that [the DNA] would permit that to be declassified.”

The sighting incident occurred on April 7, 1954—just hours after the relatively small, 110-kiloton Koon shot—and involved U.S. Navy sailors and marines aboard the Atomic Energy Commission’s flagship, the *U.S.S. Curtiss AV-4*, which also had aboard a number of nuclear scientists from the Los Alamos and Sandia Laboratories. The vessel had performed a crucial role in the tests, transporting the “special devices”—the hydrogen bombs—to the Marshall Islands test area, arriving at Eniwetok Atoll on January 24th.

The *U.S.S. Curtiss'* deck log from April 7, 1954 is straightforward and unremarkable for the most part, detailing the ship’s position and activities throughout the day. However, at 2305 hours (11:05 p.m. local), things took a highly unusual turn. The entries for that date read:

“7 April...at 0408 on station in operating area BH 35-40-L; Steamed independently in operating area BG 28-36-L; At 1138 anchored berth N-6, Bikini; at 1948 left berth en route to Enewetak; at 2305 an unidentified luminous object passed over ship from bow to stern, yellowish-orange in color, traveling at a high rate of speed and a low altitude.”[8]

Dan Wilson and I have interviewed several individuals who were aboard the *Curtiss* during Operation Castle. One of them, Joe Stallings, Had been a Marine corporal at the time and held a high-security, nuclear weapons-related “Q” clearance. Stallings told me that he hadn’t seen the UFO himself, but had heard about the sighting the following morning when it was “the talk of the ship.” He said that he had been approached by several sailors and marines who had seen the UFO, all of whom told him that it was oval-shaped, bright orange, silent, and had “buzzed” the ship from bow to stern. In short, the eyewitness accounts matched, almost exactly, the information about the sighting as recorded in the U.S.S. Curtiss’ deck log.

However, Stallings also mentioned another important fact: the eyewitnesses had all said that the UFO, once it was clear of the ship astern, had suddenly performed an unspecified number of zigzag maneuvers before

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racing away at high speed. For some reason, this important detail I was not recorded in the log. Regardless, the object was obviously not a meteor, because those astronomical objects move in a straight or slightly curved trajectory. They do not, under any circumstances, perform sharply-angled zigzag maneuvers.

(It will be recalled that another *Curtiss* crewman, Tom Kramer, has reported that he observed another UFO above the ship—some 18 months earlier, during Operation Ivy—which also executed high-speed, zigzag maneuvers. This earlier sighting was unknown to Stallings, who had not been aboard the ship during Ivy, and he seemed quite surprised when I told him about it. Moreover, when I earlier interviewed Kramer, I hadn't mentioned the hard-angled zigzag maneuvers reported by Stallings, because I had not yet taken the ex-marines testimony. Therefore, we have two credible, independent sighting accounts from individuals serving aboard the *Curtiss*, nearly eighteen months apart, in which this particular detail appears.)

Stallings went on to say that he had been an orderly for the ship's I captain, Captain R.E. Jones, and when he later asked about the UFO sighting, several officers confirmed that the incident had occurred Moreover, shortly afterward, Stallings had been approached about tin- incident by one officer, whose name he can not recall. "Since the sighting was the talk of the ship," said Stallings, "I think he was trying to probe me. to find out what I personally knew about it." After Stallings mentioned the accounts he had heard from others aboard, the officer told him that the captain had ordered the reference to the UFO be struck from the ships log. The reason for the deletion, Stallings was told, was to save the ships crew the "embarrassment" of having to explain a "flying saucer" report.

However, given that the sighting report in the deck log obviously survived this alleged attempt at censorship, Stallings' statement raises more questions than it answers. Perhaps the unidentified officer was mistaken when he told Stallings that the log entry had been stricken, or perhaps Stallings misunderstood what the officer had said. In any case, Stalling' concluded his remarks to me by saying, "Some [on board the *U.S.S. Curtiss*] believed the eyewitness accounts, but many more were skeptical… But the feeling I got from the officer who I was conversing with, they wanted the subject hushed-up."

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While researching this UFO sighting, I also communicated with former marines David Matsler and Gene Pratt, both of whom served aboard the *U.S.S. Curtiss AV-4* during Operation Castle. Each denied hearing about the UFO sighting, and Pratt wrote:

Both Sgt. Matsler and myself were assigned as the U.S. Marine Orderlies for the Ship's X0, Commander Egbert, USN, Ship's Captain, Capt. Jones, USN, and Task Force 7.3 Commander, Admiral Bruton, USN...The nature of our duties brought us into very close proximity to these higher echelon naval officers on this operation... Therefore, we had access to virtually all information flow going in and out of the offices of these officers [and] we were, many times, privy to many of the discussions between these officers. I can personally tell you that at no time during Operation Castle, did I ever see any radio traffic documents, hear any verbal discussion, or see any evidence of any unidentified flying object related to, or associated with. Operation Castle...This is not to say such could not have happened after our duty watch hours, but it would be highly unlikely that we would not have heard about it, simply because of the nature of our assigned duties, if such had occurred.

I accept Mr. Pratt at his word. Nevertheless, the deck log entry pertaining to the 7 April 1954 UFO sighting is now a matter of public record, thus verifying it's occurrence, as is the statement by his fellow marine Joe Stallings, regarding his informal conversations about the incident with various naval officers aboard the *U.S.S. Curtiss*.

Furthermore, another former marine serving aboard the ship at the time, Paul Morigeau, has a somewhat different opinion about Pratt and Matsler's access to information relating to the UFO sighting. In an email to me, Morigeau wrote "At that particular time, I was a low-ranking young Marine and not in the loop for 'need-to-know.' Dave [Matsler] and Gene [Pratt] were orderlies to the captain of the ship, and the admiral, and were more likely to have heard something...but I'm certain they were not in the loop for anything as important as a UFO. I did return to the Marine Corps as a commissioned officer and am aware of security procedures, which makes me feel [that the UFO sighting] may have happened, and the powers-that-be were sworn to

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secrecy."

In an effort to learn more about the sighting, I located and spoke with Walter J. Handelman, who acknowledged that it was he who had actually made the entry about the UFO incident in the ship's log. At the time, Handelman was an ensign and had been acting as Officer of the Deck (OOD) or, perhaps. Junior Officer of the Deck.

However, after I mailed Handelman a copy of the log entry—as transcribed by the Defense Nuclear Agency, in its report on Operation Castle—Handelman disputed its accuracy, and told me that he doubted he would have recorded the words found in it. While this is possible, I suppose, it strikes me as unlikely that the entry would have subsequently been altered, given that handwritten deck log entries were routinely typed- up verbatim at the end of each watch, thereby becoming the official record of the ship's activity for that particular period of time.

Handelman told me that while his recollection of the entire incident was "somewhat hazy", he did recall that there had been an excited phone call about the UFO sighting, made to a sailor on the Bridge, or perhaps, the Quarter-Deck. Handelman said that he had been reluctant to record the unusual report as a UFO sighting, per se, for three reasons: he had not seen the object himself; he suspected that it may have been a foreign spy plane; and because of his personal skepticism about UFO reports in general. Finally, Handelman said that didn't recall hearing about an order from the captain to delete the entry from the deck log.

Perhaps not, but years later—after it had already been declassified—the entry in the deck log was in effect deleted. As I write this, the sighting report can no longer be accessed by the public using the declassified document database provided by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). This is an interesting if somewhat disturbing story.

As previously noted, in 1998 and 2000 respectively, Patricia Brand' and Dan Wilson discovered the reference to the 7 April 1954 UFO sighting aboard the *U.S.S. Curtiss*, in a report on Operation Castle declassified by Defense Nuclear Agency in 1982. Each of them eventually publicized their intriguing find online, at various UFO-related websites.

In December 2004, Wilson emailed me, saying that he had first accessed

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the report from the Department of Energy at http://worf.eh.doe.gov/data/ihp1b/7565_.pdf. I clicked on the this link in his email and, sure enough, the sighting report was there, on page 341, in a table titled, “Table 60, USS CURTISS (AV-4) operational activities during the CASTLE test series.” (When I opened the Adobe PDF file, the table appeared in frame 350.)

After confirming Wilson's discovery, I was curious as to whether I could access the sighting report directly, by going to the Department of Energy webpage where he had first accessed the file four years earlier: the OHP Marshall Islands Document Collection Search Page.

I assumed that the chart containing the deck log entry about the UFO sighting would still be there, but I just wanted to confirm that fact. However, much to my surprise, when I opened the declassified DNA document and scrolled through it, I quickly discovered that several pages from the Operation Castle report were now missing, including page 341!

I wrote to Wilson to inform him of this unexpected find, and then explained the procedure I had used to search for the document, saying, “Okay, I just went to http://worf.eh.doe.gov and entered “DNA 6035F/ Document Number” in Field 1. If you do this, you will find that pp. 301 through 350 of the report are now missing. So, someone has apparently deleted those pages in the currently-available version of the Operation Castle report and, therefore, one will not find the deck log entry relating to the UFO sighting if the Defense Nuclear Agency report is accessed via the OHP Marshall Islands Document Collection Search Page. My hunch is that after you publicized the Curtiss deck log entry on the Internet, the missing pages—including p. 341—were removed by someone at DOE to prevent anyone else from accessing the log entry. (It would have been too suspicious to delete just that one page.)”

Therefore, it would seem that someone at DOE has done additional, post-declassification censoring of the Operation Castle document, at some point after Wilson and Broudy had accessed it.

After I emailed Wilson, I carefully read all of the “missing pages” in the version of the document in which they were still intact—which I had downloaded and saved—but there was nothing else in them that seemed sensitive to me—just maps with radiation fallout patterns, and records

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relating to the military and civilian personnel who were unintentionally exposed to it. But all of that information had already been openly acknowledged by the U.S. government, and widely reported in the media, decades earlier. Moreover, Patricia Brody had already accessed and saved the original version of the declassified Operation Castle report, to use as evidence of inadvertent radiation exposure in various legal actions against the U.S. government. In short, there was no logical reason to try to suppress those particular facts at such a late date.

Therefore, in my opinion, the deck log entry relating to the UFO sighting appears to be the reason for the missing pages' removal. The bottom-line is that anyone currently attempting to locate the reference to the 7 April 1954 sighting during Operation Castle—using the official DOE site mentioned above—will not be able to find it.

Tracking Unknown Targets After the Bravo Shot

During Operation Castle, U.S. Air Force Warrant Officer Olin H. Hasty served as an Airborne Radar Operator/Technician aboard an RB- 36 aircraft. Actually, Hasty was an Airman First Class at the time, bur had been granted a temporary field promotion for the duration of the operation, so that he might more easily interact with the other higher- ranking members of his crew when performing his key role aboard the aircraft.

Summarizing his experience in a message posted on the Atomic Veterans History Project website, Hasty had written, "I was selected as an in-flight technician, to be attached to the 77th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron...Our aircraft was called the 'controller aircraft' and as such had multiple responsibilities. I didn't know all of our responsibilities since we always operated under a 'need-to-know' basis and lived with the restrictions of a 'Q' Queen clearance. [I did know that] one function was to control the [10] F-84 sampler aircraft that would be vectored through the fallout cloud collecting [radiation] samples."

Hasty continued, "The special equipment we had was the forerunner of what's used in today's Air Traffic Control system, where you can identify an

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aircraft by a transponder code. There was also an altitude component to [the radar signature] and you could tell an aircraft's altitude fairly accurately."[9]

I suspected that Hasty might have sighted or tracked UFOs while flying sorties during Castle, so I emailed him and later spoke with him by telephone. Happily, I was not disappointed. Hasty told me, "We were in the immediate area [of the detonations] for five-plus hours after each shot. I was the operator/technician on some special equipment tied into our Q24 radar system. After the Bravo shot, while we were at 40,000 feet. I picked up two or three unidentified 'targets' [estimated to be] operating above 60,000 feet. These were aircraft, not false returns. The pilot and co-pilot could see them from the cockpit and estimated their altitude We could hear them talking about [the sighting] on the intercom. As far as their speed, they were flying within the normal range for a jet aircraft. They appeared to be flying patterns, a standard aviation holding pattern—that's a rectangle with rounded corners —around the area of the blast. [Our crew was] wondering about them, but then we were advised by the task force headquarters that they were Canberra aircraft being flown by the Australian Air Force [on air-sampling missions] and not to worry about them. So, as far as I know, I never personally witnessed any UFOs."

While Hasty may have been satisfied by that explanation, I was not. After speaking with him, I searched the Internet, unsuccessfully, for any reference to the Royal Australian Air Forces participation in Operation Castle. Frustrated, I asked Dan Wilson if he were aware of any declassified documents which would substantiate what Hasty's crew was told about the supposed identity of the unidentified objects they were tracking that day. Wilson had already provided me with a number of Joint Task Force 7 (JTF 7) documents relating to Operation Castle and I knew his expertise on the subject far surpassed my own.

Wilson readily agreed to assist me. He diligently searched the 500-page Operation Castle report, *Castle Series: United States Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Tests*, and found a one-paragraph summary titled, FOREIGN PARTICIPATION—which states, "The United Kingdom was allowed to sample the debris clouds generated by the Castle detonations. This was done using RAF Canberra aircraft based on Kwajalein..." There was no mention whatsoever of Australian, or any other foreign participation in the operation.

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If Hasty's memory of the incident was accurate, then his crew had been deceived by higher-ups at the joint task force HQ.

But there was more damning evidence. Wilson also discovered another document, a declassified JTF 7 report titled, "British Unit Participation in Bravo", which states that two British Canberras were to have flown air sampling missions after the shot, but one aircraft had crashed a few days before. The report states, "In as much as one of the Canberras was lost en route to Kwajalein only one aircraft participated in BRAVO."[10]

In other words, despite what Olin Hasty's crew was told, there could have been no more than one Canberra, and a British one at that, sampling the radioactive cloud after the Bravo shot. When I informed Hasty of these findings, he reiterated that his crew had been told that there was a group of Royal Australian Air Force Canberras operating in the vicinity of his RB-36. He also insisted that—no matter what the official record said about the lone British Canberra—he had tracked "two or three unidentified targets", maneuvering at a very high altitude. Hasty again emphasized, "These were aircraft, not false returns."

Given that radar expert Olin Hasty—selected over all of the radar operators in his squadron to participate in the important Operation Castle tests—recalls tracking *multiple* unidentified targets after Bravo, it seems reasonable to rule-out the single British Canberra flying that day as the source of the mysterious radar returns appearing on the RB-36's radar.

Moreover, there is other written evidence which supports this contention. Hasty insists that the unidentified targets were operating "above 60,000 feet". I pressed him on this point but he stood his ground, saying, "I remember that because it was so unusual. Our aircraft was at 40,000 feet—no conventional jet fighter could come up to that altitude—so the fact that the unidentifieds were well above us got my attention. Once we were told that they were Canberras, well, that made sense." (Hasty made this statement to me before Dan Wilson discovered that only one Canberra was airborne after the Bravo test.)

The reason the Canberra explanation originally made sense to Hasty has to do with the aircraft's exceptional abilities. I did some research and found that Canberras had also been used during British nuclear weapons tests.

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According to the Federation of American Scientists, "A number of [Canberra] aircraft were modified to carry out radiation cloud sampling during Britain's atomic weapons test programme in the Pacific during the 1950s. During the first live hydrogen bomb drop in May 1957... two rocket-fitted Canberra B6s of No. 76 Squadron flew through the radioactive cloud at a height of 56,000 feet (17,078m) sampling the air and collecting samples."[11]

According to other sources, the Canberra's normal service or operational ceiling, without rocket-assisted propulsion, was 49,000 feet. However, on May 4, 1953—roughly a year before Operation Castle—one Canberra did reach a record-setting altitude of 63,668 feet, for a limited period during a test flight.

When I reported these findings to Hasty, he told me that he had acquired a general knowledge of the Canberra's high-altitude capabilities during his radar training, well before he tracked the unknown targets after the Bravo shot, so for that reason, the explanation about them offered by the joint task force headquarters had "made sense" to him. However, I continued to review the data regarding the Canberra's superior flight capabilities, Dan Wilson sent me more declassified Operation Castle documents which appeared to settle the issue once and for all.[12]

One of them outlines the air operations conducted after the Bravo blast. It states that the Canberras—code-named VIKING—were ordered to fly "orbital" or circular patterns around the rising mushroom cloud. It will be remembered that Hasty told me that the unidentified targets he tracked that day were flying standard aviation holding patterns—which are essentially rectangular.[13]

Furthermore, according to Table 24 in the DNA's *Castle Series Report 6035*, only 2 B-36s, 1 WB-29, and 10 F-84s were airborne after the Bravo shot. While the table does not mention the participation of the sole British Canberra—possibly because of its foreign status—another document, referenced earlier, in fact confirms that a single RAF Canberra also took part in the post-Bravo shot air-sampling.[14]

A third document contains an operational summary, titled "H-Hour Aircraft Flight Plans". These instructions—written before the Bravo shot, and

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before the crash of the other British Canberra slated participate—state that up to four Canberras, designated VIKING 1, 2, 3, and 4, would fly orbital patterns around the blast at 9,000, 10,000, 11,000, 12,000 feet respectively.[15] In other words, even if the four Canberras originally projected to be airborne after Bravo had all participated, none of them had been designated to operate at 60,000 feet in altitude.

I am intentionally being very specific and detailed as regards the type and number of aircraft operating after the Bravo blast, to demonstrate that Olin Hasty could not possibly have tracked Canberras on radar that day, no matter what headquarters told his crew. In sum, there is no evidence that a flight of two or three Canberras—from any nation's air force—were flying above 60,000 feet, around the Bravo mushroom cloud. In fact, none of the Joint Task Force 7 aircraft were. Nevertheless, according to Warrant Officer Olin Hast}', two or three "somethings" were indeed maneuvering at a very high altitude within the huge radioactive cloud produced by the Bravo blast.

Some weeks after I spoke with Hasty, I emailed another veteran, former Air Force Staff Sergeant---- --------, who had participated in air-sampling missions after some of the atomic bomb tests during Operation Teapot, in Nevada, in 1955.------- told me that he hadn't seen anything unusual while flying those missions, but then he unexpectedly volunteered this bit of information: "Several of my Navy friends, now deceased, claim to have seen several very fast, high-altitude aircraft during the Castle tests. They were told [by headquarters] that they were French research aircraft."

Despite this assertion, in reality, no French aircraft participated in Castle and no unauthorized interlopers in the test area were ever identified as French aircraft, according to the available documentation. Therefore, if this second-hand account is accurate in its details, it would seem that various cover stories had been concocted by the Joint Task Force 7 Headquarters to explain away sightings of unidentified "aircraft", by the military pilots participating in the operation. I'm guessing that some of those aircrews who contacted HQ got an answer like, "Uh, they're Australian, uh, I mean French, uh, don't worry about it."

At the end of my conversation with Olin Hasty, I asked him if he had ever heard about other U.S. Air Force aircrews sighting UFOs or tracking them on

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radar during Operation Castle. He responded, “Well, no, but we heard that sailors on the ships out there were seeing UFOs. We were told about that.”

This answer was unanticipated and caught me off-guard. When I asked him for details, Hasty paused a few moments and then hesitantly reiterated, without elaboration, that he and the other members of his flight crew had heard UFOs had been sighted by sailors aboard some of the ships participating in Castle. When I pressed him on this, Hast)' reluctantly replied, “I think we were told that at a meeting, a briefing, as a matter of information —in other words, keep your eyes open—but I don't really recall. I think it was at a briefing but it may have just been word-of- mouth among the crew.”

This admission is significant, of course, especially if Hasty’s crew had actually been officially briefed about UFO sightings by sailors participating in Caste. At the very least, it appears that rumors about such sightings were circulating among the U.S. Air Force flight crews taking part in the operation.

I have also been made aware of another UFO sighting during Operation Castle, which was published only two years later, in 1956. As I was writing this chapter, Dan Wilson sent me the following brief report, which appeared in *The UFO Annual*, edited by astronomer and UFO researcher Morris K. Jessup. It reads:

“Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, April 1954. Two male witnesses saw a round object, uniform brightness all over, vivid white, with sharply defined edges high in the sky at 2:00 P.M. Seen with 7X50 binoculars. A cone shape mist appeared on the leeward side of the object. The object then went straight up. The object was still for ten minutes—discounting a balloon explanation.”[16]

The report was signed by J.C. Howard, of Norfolk, Virginia, who was presumably one of the witnesses, although the brief entry does nut explicitly state as much. As far as I am aware, this early report was the first published reference to a UFO being sighted at one of the operational sites utilized by the United States during nuclear testing on atolls in the Pacific Ocean. The island of Kwajalein served as a base of operations for many of the air force sorties associated with the Castle shots and other tests.

Moreover, according to one former U.S. Army sergeant with whom I communicated, unusual aerial phenomena were also observed on at least two other islands in the Marshall group during the period of the nuclear tests. In

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2005, Robert Ball sent me this email:

… I was Field First Sergeant of the [Military Police] Detachment at Eniwetok, and NCOIC [Non- Commissioned Officer In Charge] at Site Nan, Bikini. Of course, all of us were 'Q' cleared and were intimately involved with all aspects of the tests. I used to take Dr. [Edward] Teller around when he would come out to the islands, and got to know many of the scientists on a close basis. During Castle, there were many times [when] unusual events were noted in the sky, but the prevailing wisdom was that it all had to do with the tests, and what was seen were contrails, or other anomalies that were to be expected… I wish I could tell you that I saw something that could be considered a UFO out there, but I just don't know…

Disruptions

One well-documented feature of some UFO sightings involves electrical power and/or radio blackouts. While the following three accounts can not be attributed to UFO activity at this point—and may not be UFO-related at all—in the context of the other reports in this chapter, they are perhaps noteworthy.

U.S. Navy veteran Frank Potts, who had earlier told me that he had seen no UFOs as a weather observer during Operation Sandstone, later contacted me and said, "I just listened to your interview on the binnallofamerica.com website and was very impressed. While listening to your comments about how our nuclear capability is perhaps subject to interference by UFO occupants, I remembered a little incident that occurred during Operation Sandstone. This isn't exactly what you may be hinting at with your remarks about UFOs causing problems with the nuclear end of things, but maybe it's related. I'll leave it to you to determine."

He continued, "I was stationed aboard the *U.S.S. Mt. McKinley*, the flagship for Operation Sandstone. We had made our last port visit in Hawaii and were steaming towards our destination, Eniwetok, when just as it was turning dark one evening, our entire ship went dead in the water. I mean

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everything including the lights. I went outside from our Meteorology office which was on an open deck, and looked around. The other ships had stopped, but not because of losing power. Then the destroyers started running in circles around us with their sirens (battle station alarms) going full blast. That went on for quite a while and within a few hours, we again had power. I had never realized how it would feel to be in the middle of the ocean on a ship that had lost all power. Rumor had it that a Soviet submarine was 'accompanying' us and that's what the destroyers were up to. No weapons, or depth charges, were used but it was still on the scary side. I never heard what had caused the problem. There were four main ships in the operation, along with some escort vessels, and our ship had the top brass on board at the time, along with scientists."

Potts concluded by saying, "[The power failure] makes me wonder how many such events have occurred that weren't reported, much less recorded. I can tell you this much, it's a very eerie feeling to be on a large ship at sea and suddenly everything goes completely dead. As for the reasons, our office was neighboring Officers Country and so we frequently had various officers that would 'drop in' on their way to other places. I never heard even a hint as to what caused our power failures. It would not have occurred to me to ask the Captain, who also was a visitor to our office sometimes… His name was W.L. Ware, Captain, USN."

Even if a Soviet submarine was indeed shadowing the ship at the time, it could not have been responsible for the mysterious power failure. Please note Potts' mention of the *Mt. McKinley's* flagship status, and the fact that high-ranking officers and nuclear weapons scientists on board at the time. This would not be the last time a key vessel was temporarily crippled during a nuclear weapons test.

Another power blackout occurred aboard the *U.S.S. Estes*, during Operation Ivy, just before the historic Mike shot. The *Estes* was responsible for sending the radio signal to the Mike device to detonate it. Dan Wilson found a brief reference to the incident in a declassified document, which states, "The final countdown was made and MIKE was detonated at 0714:59.4 +/-0.2. The error of approximately 0.6 seconds was due to a power failure aboard the ESTES a few minutes prior to H-hour."[17]

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I asked Wilson, “Any idea why the delay in die blast was only 0.6 seconds, given that there had been a full-scale power outage on the *Estes”* He replied, “Since the power outage happened only minutes before the shot, perhaps they had to reset the timing devices and that is as close as they could get to 0 time. Just a guess. The important thing here is that they did have a power outage. The fact that power outages occur sometimes during UFO encounters makes one wonder.”

It does indeed. In any case, less than two years later, During Operation Castle, a mysterious radio blackout hampered operations aboard the Estes, just before the huge Bravo shot. Navy veteran Mike Kerrigan told me, “I was an ET3 (Electronics Technician 3rd Class) at that time, on board the *Estes*, and we suffered a total radio blackout during the mission. We were getting ready for Bravo when [it occurred]. We chalked it up to sunspots at the time but, [regardless,] we were totally blacked-out from communications for about, I am guessing now, three hours. All we heard was white noise on the receivers. If you know the *Estes*, we were a floating radio transmitter/receiver flagship. Over 150 receivers of all frequency ranges and, another guess since it was so long ago, 20 different transmitters maybe more. We went down on all of them at the same time. I do remember we were not underway but bobbing in the lagoon. It was not during a shot but just before it, if I remember the event correctly. We never saw a UFO of any type and we had three radar systems which would have been some use. (Now that I think of it, I spent all my time trying to get the transmitters up on a frequency that we would be able to communicate on. I never spoke to anyone if the radar stayed operational. I just had other things to keep me busy.)”

Kerrigan continued, “Even though it was a long time ago I still remember that blackout because it was the only one I experienced in my four years on the Estes. We had a 500 watt transmitter and could not contact a ship about 3 to 4 hundred yards off our bow. We had to use light. The signalmen were busy for that period of time.”

So, in an incident eerily similar to the one during Operation Ivy—when the Estes lost all power “a few minutes prior to” the Mike shot—we learn that the same electronics flagship, which was responsible for sending the radio signal to ground zero to denote the Bravo device, lost its radio communications capability sometime before the huge shot. It would interesting to know

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exactly how long before the Bravo shot the radio blackout occurred, but I have yet to discover that particular bit of information.

In any event, after speaking with Kerrigan, I consulted astronomical reference tables and determined that sunspot activity that year, 1954, was actually at the lowest point in its periodic 11-year cycle, seemingly ruling it out as a cause of the blackout. Moreover, because the disruption occurred just before a shot, and not after one, the possibility that an Electromagnetic Pulse was responsible can also be ruled out. EM Pulse is a side-effect of a nuclear detonation which can temporarily interfere with radio communications and even has the potential to damage electronic equipment of various types.

Dan Wilson and I are continuing to research these reports of power and radio disruptions during nuclear testing and hope to hear from other veterans who can shed some light on the frequency of these occurrences and the possible reasons for them.

Meanwhile, far across the ocean, the continental United States did not entirely escape the consequences of the nuclear testing in the distant Marshall Islands. On May 16, 1954, the *Albuquerque Journal* featured an article titled, "High Radioactivity in West Believed Due To Fallout From Pacific H-Bomb Tests," which read:

Fallout from hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific may be blanketing the West —and the entire nation—with longer and stronger effects than ever before. Since last Tuesday, Dr. Lincoln La Paz, head of the University of New Mexico department of meteoritics, has recorded Geiger counter readings of up to 35 times the amount of normal background radiation.

La Paz said the fact the high radiation has lasted five days compared with 24 to 36 hours for most atomic tests, may indicate a new type of long-lived elements is present, possibly Strontium 90 [which] has a half life of 25 years compared with as little as minutes or hours for some of the common 'fallout' elements.

The radiation has about left the air in New Mexico and readings above

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ground level are about back to normal. Prevalence of high radioactivity throughout the continental United States at [Atomic Energy Commission] monitoring stations is restricted information. However, a source close to the AEC pointed out that the same prevailing winds which dropped the debris from the Pacific tests on the West also blow over the rest of the nation.[18]

Actually, although apparently unknown to La Paz, Strontium 90 was present in fallout from all of the atomic tests in Nevada, but in much smaller quantities than was present in the radioactive clouds from the hydrogen bombs tested in the Pacific. In any event, during the era of atmospheric nuclear testing, monitoring the trajectories of the drifting debris clouds—both U.S. and Soviet—as they traversed much of the globe, became a full-time task for various USAF squadrons.

Catching the Wind

In September 1947, Army Chief of Staff General Dwight D. Eisenhower directed the Army Air Corps to undertake the Constant Phoenix program, an ongoing series of long-distance flights designed to detect atomic explosions "anywhere in the world." This high-priority activity was continued by the newly-created U.S. Air Force and, on September 3, 1949, radiation sensors aboard a USAF B-29 flying between Alaska and Japan confirmed the detonation of the first Soviet atomic bomb—some five years earlier than expected.

At that time, U.S. analysts were still unaware that a network of spies working within the Manhattan Project, during World War II, had already stolen key secrets relating to the construction of atomic weapons and had spirited them to their foreign intelligence contacts in Moscow. Those clandestine efforts provided the Soviets with an invaluable shortcut to atomic-power status, and their successful test in the fall of 1949 abruptly signaled the end of America's monopoly on Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The unexpected, ominous discovery of Russian radiation in the atmosphere precipitated a heightened sense of vigilance within the U.S. military, and the

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monitoring of future Soviet atomic tests acquired a new urgency. To accomplish the detection mission, the USAF 1009th Special Weapons Squadron (SWS) was tasked with daily, officially-designated "weather recon" flights, originating from several bases around the world. In reality, the sole purpose of these flights was to detect the presence of radioactive debris clouds released by Soviet atomic and thermonuclear testing. Initially, these plumes generally drifted northeast from the Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan but, depending on the direction of the winds aloft, they could over time move in any direction across the face of the globe.

During that period. Air Force Staff Sergeant ---- ------- was a Radiological Equipment Maintenance Specialist with the 1009th SWS, stationed at McClellan AFB, in Sacramento, California. He told me,

I worked at the Technical Support Program Maintenance Shop, where we performed depot-level fabrication, repair, and servicing of all equipment used by the SWS organizations world-wide, relating to air sampling, airborne particle and gas sampling, seismic and RF instrumentation. Occasionally we participated in operational exercises.

I personally can recall only one incident of a UFO sighting during any of our air-sampling missions during my tour of duty, from 1953 to 1956. The incident happened during a routine 'weather recon' flight in the region of the North Pole—most likely in 1954 when the Soviet thermonuclear development was quite active. This particular flight was conducted from the 'Western Field Office' located at McClellan AFB, via bases in Alaska.

Our radiation monitoring equipment was mounted just forward of the observation dome on the right side of the B-29 and B-50 aircraft. Originally, this was the waist- gunner turret station. The control panels faced aft, and the operator sat beside the plastic dome facing forward, giving him good visibility out of the right side of the aircraft.

I was not present on this flight, but because of the emotional stability of the

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operator, this encounter with a UFO could probably have happened. Our operator on this particular flight was the most serious, meticulous, analytical, and scientific-minded [member] of our group. He told us of his sighting of an object tracking along side his B-50 Sampling Aircraft for an extended period of time. The aircraft had been following a radioactive debris cloud at cruising speed. The object, as I recall, was described as a disk with a bulge in the center, viewed edge-on and [at times] slightly from above.

[When the operators aircraft returned to McClellan] several of us sat around discussing this incident with him, trying to imagine possible explanations for the sighting. We found that he had [already considered] any phenomena that others brought up during these discussions. This is a summary of what 1 remember of these discussions, including some detail to provide background and context for the event.

[After sighting the unidentified object] curiosity took over, and this radiation equipment operator turned off all illumination on the instrumentation—and still saw the object outside. He then covered his head and shielded the inside of the dome with his flight jacket to further eliminate any possible internal reflections on the dome surfaces. With his head inside the then-darkened dome, he searched for any possible reflection from the aircraft structures caused by the low-level Artie twilight sun; he saw none. In a final observation, he looked at distant objects noting their relative motion with the tracking object in an attempt to detect any optical 'lensing effects' causing an observable 'glory' due to refraction of the low solar illumination. (Interaction of incident illumination and the cold air, aerosols, ice particles, aurora or other weather/atmospheric-related phenomena often create a moving bright spot—sometimes with a shadow silhouette of the aircraft centered within the spot.) Nothing of significance was noted.

About that time in his impromptu investigation, other 'chatter' on the aircraft intercom indicated that the object was seen from other vantage points aboard the aircraft. The object then 'sped-off at unbelievable velocity'. Then a commanding voice on the intercom told all hands: because of the sensitivity of this mission and the revealing of our current location in any debriefing

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reports, 'Nobody saw Nuthin'. So this incident might never have been officially-recorded.

I have been trying to find any old memorabilia that would relate to when and where the sighting incident might have occurred. Unfortunately, because I was not involved with the flight in question, I have no specific records and am relying on the memory of the conversation that we had with the special weapons operator involved in the particular flight. Thus, without debriefing reports or other documentation it is virtually impossible [for me] to recall when and where this particular flight occurred, and in what airspace the flight paths [of the aircraft and the UFO] might have traversed.

In the course of our discussions, ------- told me, "I would prefer not to be identified in your publications at this time because I still do consulting and serve on advisory panels in certain circles, and hold high-level security clearances."

I greatly appreciate -------'s cautious, deliberate dissection of the sighting report. Obviously, the radiation observer and other squadron members in whom he had confided had taken pains to eliminate every possible conventional explanation for the apparent presence of the unidentified object.

The reason for the UFO's fleeting appearance is anyone's guess. Briefly tagging along with a radiation-monitoring aircraft may have afforded those presumably aboard the unknown craft an opportunity to scrutinize the USAF aircraft's air-sampling apparatus. Or, perhaps, the short-lived encounter was merely meant to be a pointed demonstration—one of many—of the unknown observers' ongoing interest in all things nuclear.

Apparently, that incident was not unique. When I posted this account on the Internet, at a website devoted to veterans of the 1009th Special Weapons Squadron, another individual, who also did not want to be identified, sent me this message: "In 1953 my RB-29 crew saw something but we were all very tired, after a 16-hour flight, and were afraid they would say we were crazy. So we got together and kept our mouths shut."

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5. Into the Sixties

In 1985, one of my former U.S. Air Force sources revealed an intriguing incident which is unique among the many cases reported to me over the years. While "John Harris", as I call him, has asked to remain anonymous, I have had ongoing contact with him since 1988, know him well, and consider his account to be credible. When I attempted to verify Harris' story with another former member of his squadron who had been present—after first exchanging a few pleasant emails with him, during which I did not broach the sensitive subject in question—that person abruptly terminated all communications with me without comment. Despite repeated attempts on my part to follow-up, he will not respond to any of my questions about the incident, even to deny that it had occurred. Perhaps I had touched a nerve.

Regardless, in 1962, Harris had been an Airman 1st Class, assigned to the Air Force's 98th Bombardment Squadron, at Clinton-Sherman AFB, near Burns Flat, Oklahoma. During our interview he told me, "My Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) was 30153. I was an electronic counter-measures (ECM) technician. I flew on B-52s to trouble-shoot ECM problems. Based on my military records, one day between March 31, 1962, and July 2, 1962, I attended a briefing for all personnel who were on flying status, held at the Clinton-Sherman Air Force Base theater. Attending the briefing were both regular crew members and non-crew members on flying status. I was a member of the latter group."

According to Harris, once everyone had been assembled, the commander of the 4123 Strategic Wing, to which the 98th was assigned, mounted the stage and told the men they were about to be shown a short movie. Without further explanation, the lights were dimmed and the screening proceeded. The U.S. Air Force emblem appeared briefly, then faded out. Suddenly, Harris was startled to see what was obviously a military interceptor's gun-camera film of a flying saucer it was chasing. As he watched in amazement, this unedited segment lasted for a perhaps three or four minutes as the jet climbed, dove and banked, in an effort to keep up with the UFO.

Abruptly, the clip ended and a second segment of gun-camera footage

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appeared on screen, documenting an entirely different UFO intercept attempt. The new craft's appearance differed somewhat from the first, although it was still basically saucer-shaped. After a few minutes, this segment also ended abruptly and a third segment immediately appeared—different pursuit, different UFO.

Harris states that five or six of these gun-camera clips were presented, spliced together one after the other, for the next 20 to 30 minutes. Sonic of the intercept attempts were filmed in color, with the remainder in black-and-white. "Several [UFO] shapes could be seen," lie said, "one was saucer-shaped with a dome on top; another one was cigar-shaped with port holes; and some looked like a cloud, maybe because they were embedded in a plasma field. Some of the film segments were very jerky due to the pursing aircraft attempting to stay with the UFO." Throughout, there was no narration or soundtrack of any kind. Harris told me that one "could have heard a pin drop" in the theater, as the squadron's members watched in stunned silence.

"After the film ended," Harris said, "the wing commander read a statement informing the audience about a huge fine, court-martial and possible jail sentence, if we talked about UFOs. Then the commander had members of his staff hand out forms. They were to be used if a training mission was diverted to pursue a UFO. One [type of] form was given to the aircraft commander and the copilot. A different form was given to the navigator, and another to the Electronic War Officer (EWO). I was able to read the form handed to the EWO. The first page had at least the Air Force logo and instructions. I remember that there were sections on specific ECM devices, such as APR-14, APR-9, ALA-5 and others I don't remember. For whatever reason, they wanted information about signals [originating from a UFO] at a frequency of 3,000 MHz. In addition, they wanted to know the polarization of the signal."

(The $10,000 fine and severe penalties mentioned by Harris were stipulated by Joint Army-Navy-Air Force Publication 146(D), relating to the classified reporting of UFO sightings. Variations of the JANAP-146 regulation have been in existence since 1953, in which UFO reporting procedures for all military personnel are mandated, as well as the fine the penalties for individuals violating security, once those reports have been formally filed. In the regulation, sighting reports are designated CIRVIS reports, an acronym for Communications Instructions for Reporting Vital

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Intelligence Sightings. JANAP-146(E) is still in effect today, some 40 years after the Air Force supposedly lost interest in UFO reports, following the closure of Project Blue Book, on January 30, 1970.)

From Harris' brief account, it may reasonably be inferred that UFO sightings by the squadron's members had already occurred, probably more than once. Consequently, someone with command authority, either in the 98th Bomb Squadron, or perhaps at Strategic Air Command headquarters, had decided to attempt the systematic collection of data relating to UFOs' apparent electronic signature. This official undertaking had the added advantage of enhancing overall security on the UFO subject, at least theoretically, through the stern, almost threatening warning to the squadron as a whole, about the serious consequences which might befall anyone engaged in the unauthorized discussion of airborne UFO sightings.

Amazingly, despite the strict warning about secrecy, some members of the audience just could not hold their tongues. Harris told me, "After the briefing ended, I listened to a couple of pilots tell of their experiences chasing UFOs over the Pacific near Japan. They said that when they landed, the film from their [gun-] cameras had been removed by a group of military personnel who they hadn't seen before."

Although these informal accounts related to past UFO sightings, and had conceivably not involved the filing of CIRV1S reports at the time they occurred—thereby exempting the talkative pilots from the stiff penalties stipulated by JANAP 146—I am certain that the wing commander would not have been happy about this cavalier discussion, had he learned of it, coming hard on the heels of his stern admonishment to his men about the need for secrecy relating to UFOs.

In any event, one wonders if other B-52 squadrons, at other U.S. Air Force bases during that era, had been similarly briefed en masse about UFOs. If they were, I am personally unaware it.

On the other hand, perhaps the gun-camera film screening at Clinton-Sherman AFB had been a unique event, precipitated by one or more earlier UFO incidents involving members of the 98th Bombardment Squadron, about which Harris was unaware. If this were the case, the incident described by him would not necessarily imply that a series of similar briefings, to be

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attended by all Air Force nuclear bomber squadrons, had been implemented in the early 1960s. Perhaps some of my readers can fill in a few blanks for me. My contact information appears in Appendix A.

Over the years, I have attempted to interview other Air Force veterans who flew or worked on B-52s, or other atomic/nuclear bombers, but with little success. One vet told me, “It sounds like you have a very interesting ‘hobby’. I did serve on a B-52 aircrew, but like everyone else on the B-52 I was required to sign a AF Form 2587 upon my separation. This is the ‘Security Termination Statement’ and, although I cannot say for certain who has to sign them, I would assume anyone who had access to sensitive info would be required to [do so].”

The Pantex Plant

As the nuclear arms race gained momentum in the early 1950s, the Atomic Energy Commission began searching for sites where it could expand its weapons assembly operations. In March 1951, it selected 7,000 unused acres 17 miles northeast of Amarillo, Texas, and began building what would come to be known as the Pantex Ordnance Plant. 'The site, given the code-name “Project Orange”, began limited operations in the spring of 1952.

By the late-1950s, and continuing into the early 1960s, UFOs began to be reported at the site, including a rather spectacular case on November 7, 1957, when a number military and law enforcement personnel observed three unknown aerial objects maneuvering over the plant. The next day, the *Amarillo Globe-Times* reported:

Mystery Objects Sighted at Pantex

... Bright, flashing objects hovered for half an hour over the Pantex Atomic Energy Commission ordnance plant, 15 miles east of Amarillo, Thursday night, according to plant guards [who were U.S. Army MPs].

The brilliant objects were reported to the State Highway Patrol office by

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plant guards at 7:46 p.m. A patrolman dispatched to the plant arrived at 8:15 p.m. and reported that he, too saw 'a strange light.' The patrolman said guards were 'all shook up.' The guards said three objects had been floating over the plant 50 feet above the ground 'for some time.'

'When I got there.' the patrolman said, 'the guards said one of the objects had landed on Farin Road 2373, three miles north of Highway 60. We drove to the area but nothing was there. But I'm convinced that the guards saw something land.'

The patrolman said guards told him they had tried to [sneak] up on the objects by turning off their lights 'but the things would just slip away from them when they got near.'

Three strange, unidentified lights attracted the attention of two Amarillo Daily News reporters en route to Pantex at 8:30 p.m. First light was sighted in the city limits and at 8:34 p.m. Another light, with a soft red glow, was seen in an almost northerly direction. Minutes later the reporters saw a third light, green in color, low in the northern horizon and, like the first two soon disappearing in the clouds. The unidentified objects were larger than airplanes in the area and were much higher and father away the reporters said...[1]

Decades later, a former Pantex employee—who wishes to remain anonymous—posted the following report on the National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) website in 2003:

Occurred: 2/22/1961 20:00 (Entered as: 02/22/1961 20:00)

Reported: 9/14/2003 5:03:55 PM 17:03

Posted: 9/17/2003

Location: Panhandle, TX

Shape: Diamond

Duration: -2 hours

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Texas Panhandle Nuke site

From the late-1950s to the mid-1960s UFO's were seen over Pantex Ordnance Plant near Amarillo TX. I lived three miles away to the east at the time. During this period there were about

100 sightings, but those of us that remember don't talk about it much.

[Amarillo AFB] was still open and they would scramble fighters to intercept. But it was always the same. When the jets closed to 2 miles the object would go up at high speed. The jets would circle a while then land. Then sometimes it would come back down to its spot.

This was repeated on many nights.

Always the same type of object, that changed colors.

NUFORC Note: Date is approximate. We will invite the witness to have other employees who may remember the events submit reports as well.—Peter Davenport [2]

As far as I am aware, no other reports about sightings at Pantex were posted on the website.

I am asking anyone familiar with any of the alleged "100 sightings" at Pantex to contact me.

The Savannah River Plant

Sightings at the Savannah River Plant apparently did not end with in the 1950s. It will be recalled that the facility produced the plutonium integral to the production of U.S. nuclear weapons. In 2003, I communicated with a

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former U.S. Air Force radar operator who worked at the nearby Aiken Air Force Station in the early 1960s. Although he did not wish to have his name published, he told me, “I was at the 861st Radar Squadron from 1961 to 1964. I wish that I felt comfortable in telling you some things but I have no way of knowing what is still classified and what isn’t. It’s not that any one event was classified. Everything that went on was classified and we were not allowed to discuss anything that we did, or any events. We were right next door to The Savanna River Project, which was a reactor site for the production of plutonium. I’ll just say this. I was witness to some very interesting events, via radar tracking, that no was willing to discuss.”

6. The Crisis

The world as we know it almost ceased to exist in October 1962. Those Americans old enough to remember the Cuban Missile Crisis will undoubtedly recall the grave concern and sometimes naked fear that gripped the country during those fateful few days.

Soviet citizens may have been somewhat less concerned because their state-controlled media routinely lied to them about, well, everything, and it’s doubtful that the average Russian fully appreciated how dire the situation was as the crisis unfolded. Regardless, their leaders in the Kremlin knew the score, and were justifiably alarmed that their gamble to secretly place medium-range nuclear missiles in Cuba was about to blow up in their, and everyone else’s faces.

Of course, people all around the globe were deeply apprehensive too, however, their own governments were essentially powerless to do anything about the crisis, so they looked on helplessly as the superpowers hunkered down and prepared for the first global thermonuclear war in human history.

As the confrontation escalated, the millions of murmured prayers reverberating around the planet undoubtedly echoed far louder than the steely threats the U.S. and Soviet leaders hurled back and forth at one another. The public could not know that back-channel negotiations were soon underway, which would ultimately lead to the peaceful resolution of the crisis. Even so,

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the world was extremely lucky because the potential for a misstep, by either side, was very real would certainly have had the gravest consequences.

I was 12-years-old at the time of the missile crisis, and probably did not fully appreciate the gravity of the situation, even though my father was stationed at Homestead AFB, in south Florida, one of the key forward bases involved in preparations for an invasion of Cuba. Those of us living on the base watched in amazement as, in the space of only a few days, thousands °f U.S. Army troops and Marines arrived in a seemingly unending stream, along with Air Force transport aircraft and tactical squadrons composed of F-100 and F-104 fighters. From those front row seats, it seemed to us that a war was about to break out at any moment.

On the evening of October 22nd, a grim-faced President Kennedy went on national television to solemnly warn the Soviets about the potentially dire consequences of not removing their nuclear missiles from Cuba. Like millions of other Americans, I watched the hastily-announced nationwide address, along with my family. I don't recall if Kennedy's somber words worried me, but I do remember that my father—an Air Force career man who had served in Korea—was visibly worried afterward, although he had tried, unsuccessfully, to keep that fact from my mother, my sisters and me. A young son seeing his father frightened for the first (and only) time made a far deeper impression than watching the President of the United States warn of possibly dire days ahead.

In any case, an unprecedented global crisis was unfolding whose consequences would potentially involve all nations. Had the Cuban Missile Crisis escalated to all-out war, with both the U.S. and the Soviet Union resorting to the use of their large stockpiles of nuclear weapons, the horrific exchange would have had immediate and long-lasting consequences for the entire human race, countless other life forms, and even the planet itself. A shattered, incinerated, depopulated husk of a world would have been left in its wake.

And we were closer to disaster than anyone guessed at the time. As many people now know, the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon had urged President Kennedy to invade Cuba immediately, before the Soviets missiles were fully operational. To his everlasting credit, Kennedy pushed back. Still

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stinging from the poor advice he had earlier received from the military and CIA, when they eagerly advocated the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion by anti-Castro Cubans, Kennedy wanted to explore other military options before actually invading Cuba. Hence a sea blockade was implemented, intended as a barrier to further Soviet shipments of missiles to its Cuban allies. Only decades later did the enormity of Kennedy' decision become known.

In 1992, retired Soviet Army General Anatoly Gribkov revealed that, in addition to the 24 medium-range nuclear missiles then in Cuba—each one having a yield 20 times as great as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima—the Russians also had in place 9 short-range, tactical nuclear missiles, which were under the authority of local Soviet field commanders. In event of war, those could have been launched at the officers' discretion, without prior authorization from Moscow. Gribkov said that had President Kennedy ordered an invasion, it was the Soviet commanders' intention to use the tactical nukes against U.S. forces as they landed on Cuban beaches.[1]

Perhaps most alarmingly, at the time of the crisis, no one in Washington, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff—who were urging Kennedy to send troops into Cuba as soon as possible—knew of the tactical missiles' presence. Decades later, while referring to General Gribkov's dramatic revelations, Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, said of the proposed invasion, "Had we carried out that attack, there would have been [tactical] nuclear war [in Cuba] and where that would have lead nobody knows."[2]

In short, if President Kennedy had caved into to his top military advisors' insistent recommendations to launch an invasion, all-out, strategic nuclear war may well have ensued. Amazingly, even after the crisis had been defused, one of the Joint Chiefs, Air Force General Curtis LeMay, continued to urge Kennedy to strike Cuba. Upon learning that the Soviets had agreed to remove their missiles only if the U.S. pledged not to invade Cuba and also secretly remove its own medium-range nuclear missiles from Turkey, LeMay told Kennedy, "This is the greatest defeat in our history. We should invade today!" REF Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed.

Witness to a Limited Intervention?

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So, what were those who pilot the UFOs doing during the missile crisis? According to published sighting report data bases, they were decidedly conspicuous by their absence. Based on declassified U.S. government documents and the ufological literature, it appears that UFO activity during those ominous days of October 1962 was at a rather low level worldwide. This fact had always struck me as odd. Given other clusters of UFO activity at nuclear weapons laboratories and storage areas, or during periods of intense atomic testing in Nevada and the Pacific (and, later on, at U.S. Air Force ICBM sites outside various Strategic Air Command bases) one might predict that a UFO presence would be in evidence, in one form or another, during the planet's closest brush with nuclear catastrophe.

And yet, as far as I was aware, no credible information had ever surfaced to suggest that UFOs were observed at Homestead AFB or other military staging bases, at Malmstrom's ICBM sites (which President Kennedy later called his "ace in the hole" during the crisis), near the U.S. Naval blockade, or at any other location where preparations for nuclear war were occurring at an intense pace. On the other hand, I had become aware of an alleged UFO intercept attempt by U.S. Air Force jet fighters on an unspecified date during the missile crisis, as reported by researcher Francis Ridge.[3] However, as far as I knew, this case was unique.

And so, for years, I had wondered why military-related UFO sighting reports were apparently nearly non-existent during those momentous days. The first hint I had of possible UFO activity during the missile crisis only arrived, quite unexpectedly, in 2006, when I was provided with an intriguing report first sent to the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS).[4] The source, a retired U.S. Air Force sergeant—who I will call "John Smith"—had been a jet engine mechanic with the 42nd Field Maintenance Squadron (FMS) at Loring AFB, Maine. In his letter to CUFOS, Smith offered an utterly amazing, almost unbelievable account of a dramatic UFO incursion, on some date in—he thought—1961. After I read his written report, I called Smith, spoke with him at length, and concluded that he was a reliable witness—despite the fact that one element in his story pressed the limits of credibility. (Indeed, many people would undoubtedly say it goes well beyond those

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limits.)

In any case, when I began researching the particulars of Smith's report, including the type of position he held in the Air Force at the time of the incident, it soon became clear that the UFO sighting had actually occurred in the fall of 1962. More to the point, based on other information I later received —relating to a unique, temporary departure from the type of B-52 missions then being flown at Loring—the UFO sighting reported by Smith had to have occurred during the period of the Cuban Missile Crisis or immediately thereafter! Once this startling fact had been established, I tackled the case with zeal—and immediately ran into several frustrating roadblocks.

Smith had mentioned in his original letter that a two-aircraft oi "tandem" mission, code-named Chrome Dome, had been on final approach for landing just as the UFO appeared over the base's flight line. When the 42nd Bomb Wing at Loring had the responsibility for launching Chronic Dome missions (it rotated among SAC bomber bases) two sorties per day were flown, each involving a *single* B-52 flying one of two courses, known as the Northern and Southern Routes. However, during the heightened alert period of the missile crisis—and apparently at no other time—two aircraft flew each course. This temporary operational change is confirmed in the 42nd Bomb Wing's unit history. Moreover, a retired colonel who flew such missions at Loring during that era later told me that the tandem Chrome Dome missions had been discontinued in, as he recalled, early November 1962, once the crisis had passed.

Consequently, if a two-aircraft Chrome Dome mission was in fact returning to base at the time of the alleged UFO sighting, as Smith contends, the incident he describes had to have occurred on some date during, or a few days after, the two-week-long Cuban Missile Crisis.

I also later located and interviewed Smith's former jet mechanic partner at Loring (he must remain anonymous as well) who somewhat nervously confirmed the return of the "two Chrome Domes", but he claimed not to remember the alleged UFO sighting reported by Smith. Nevertheless, this individual did confirm Smiths recollection of an unspecified emergency situation, which had prompted a large number of 42nd FMS personnel being ordered to the flight line in anticipation of a possible crash landing by one or

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both returning aircraft. He told me he had assumed there had been a mid-air collision or some other mishap involving both aircraft. He also confirmed Smiths statement that a large number of high-ranking officers had also quickly assembled on the tarmac as well, adding, “I didn’t know we had that many colonels on base!” According to both Smith and his former team partner, despite the emergency response, there was no obvious damage to either of the bombers and they both landed safely.

However, when I began pressing Smith’s former co-worker for additional details about the incident, he suddenly said he had fallen asleep in the back of one of the maintenance trucks parked on the flight line and could not confirm what actually happened as the aircraft (and the UFO?) arrived. This seemed curious to me, given that the assembled FMS personnel would had to have performed specific mechanical tasks if either aircraft was in fact damaged and, therefore, they all would have been alert—that is, awake—when the B-52s landed. When I pointed this out to Smith’s team partner, he became evasive and attempted to end the conversation. Consequently, I remain highly dubious about his assertion that he had been asleep at the time the aircraft landed. Indeed, Smith recalls him looking skyward in amazement, along with everyone else, as the UFO came into view.

(This individual later told Smith that, after leaving his job as a jet engine mechanic, he had become a B-52 tail gunner. He admitted that, early in his new assignment, his aircraft commander had told him never to report a UFO, even if he should see one. He was essentially informed that such reports were taboo and never to be discussed with anyone.)

Now, as I mentioned earlier, Smith’s account contains an extremely unusual aspect which, although not unprecedented—it has also been reported in a number of other UFO sighting cases—may simply make this incident too far-out for most people to accept. He reports that following the appearance of the unidentified craft above the flight line, which left at a high rate of speed, he and the other witnesses standing nearby him all went about their business as if nothing had happened. Although Smith and the others had reportedly been staring skyward at the spectacle in obvious wonder, once the UFO departed there was absolutely no discussion of its presence among the witnesses—something that baffles Smith to this day.

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He told me, “Even though it had been hovering there for a couple of minutes, maybe five minutes, I did not bring the UFO up with any of the other men. I knew exactly what had happened but had no desire to talk about it. I do not know how to explain that very well, as it is not what I consider to be rational human behavior or thinking. But I never forgot what happened that day. I just never gave it very much serious thought and, for many years, never wondered why no one had ever discussed the incident, either that day or the following days. But the memory of it was always with me and sometimes when alone I’d think about it all, but I never discussed it with anyone until the year 1976, when I told my wife the entire story.”

Moreover, Smith said there had been also been no discussion in his group about the announced emergency involving the two B-52s, which resulted in nearly all of the maintenance squadron personnel on duty being ordered to the flight line. It was as if that event never happened either, despite its apparently unique status among the Chrome Dome missions launched at Loring and potentially disastrous outcome. He said, “Even if there had been no UFO, it [should have been] big time talk time!” But not a word, then or later, was said—either about the UFO or the reported aircraft emergency—which Smith understandably finds to be unbelievably bizarre. He added, “But at the time, it didn’t even occur to me that it was [strange]. It was like a dream or as if it never happened, but it did.”

While one might be tempted to dismiss this highly improbable aspect of Smith’s account as evidence that the sighting was merely an imaginative fantasy having no basis in reality, other factors which I will not mention at the moment tend to suggest otherwise.

Now, I don’t mean to be a tease but, for now, this is about as far as I will go in describing Smith’s intriguing report. If his account has merit—- and in my view it does—then it obviously must be investigated far more rigorously before any comprehensive synopsis of it can be published, especially in view of its tentative link with the Cuban Missile Crisis. I have only mentioned it at all in the hope that others will come forward and corroborate its factuality.

According to Smith, a great many Air Force personnel at the base witnessed the weird event. If that was indeed the case, I do not wish to risk influencing their memories of this sighting—assuming that it occurred, and

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assuming that others retain some memory of it—given its potential importance.

I also want to avoid being contacted by bogus "witnesses" whose intention is to write themselves into this story, for whatever nefarious reason they might have. If I were to present the full account, as reported to me by Smith, it would be much easier for such false leads to materialize. Therefore, I will just leave this intriguing report for now—intentionally omitting most of the details I currently possess—in the event that one or more persons reading this, who happened to be on the Loring AFB flight line that day, eventually decide to contact me. (See Appendix A for my email address. The identities of all vetted sources will be kept in confidence, unless I am given permission to reveal them.) At some point, I will publish an update on my continuing investigation of this fascinating case on my website, ufohastings.com.

As I mentioned in the introduction, this book is essentially a progress report, admittedly containing many incomplete accounts which, although provided by credible sources, are hampered by factual gaps and, in most cases, supporting testimony. So it is with this case. However, if—I say, if—the incident portrayed by Smith did indeed occur, then it would appear that some selective but highly-significant UFO activity did in fact occur during the Cuban Missile Crisis, at least at one Strategic Air Command nuclear bomber base.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not also use this opportunity to ask any other military veterans who have knowledge of other UFO sightings during the missile crisis, at other bases in the U.S. or elsewhere, to contact me.

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7. The Arrows of Armageddon

In ancient days, warring armies fired masses of flaming arrows into each others' cities, hoping to burn one another into submission. During our own recent Cold War, if things had gone terribly wrong, the superpowers planned to launch thousands of nuclear-tipped missiles at each other. After curving gracefully through space, they would have rained fire and ruin on the United States, the Soviet Union, and Western Europe, and unleashed a poisonous, radioactive wind which would have shrouded the whole planet. If it were not the end of days for mankind, the aftermath would certainly have been horrific and the future uncertain for a long time to come.

During the 1940s, and most of the 1950s, the superpowers' sole option for executing a massive nuclear strike was by means of long-range bombers. However, on August 21, 1957, the Soviets successfully tested the R7 rocket booster—the world's first Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)—and by late 1959, U.S technology had advanced sufficiently to permit Pentagon strategists to consider our own rudimentary ICBMs as a viable nuclear weapons-delivery system.

The compelling need for a missile-based strike capability had been dramatically underscored two years earlier, on October 4, 1957 with the launch of Sputnik, the first man-made Earth-orbiting satellite, which utilized a modified R7 booster. This unexpected development unquestionably dealt a great blow to U.S. prestige. American scientific achievement, presumed to be without peer after World War II, had been suddenly eclipsed in a manner both shocking and embarrassing.

Far more importantly, however, was the very real threat the launch posed to U.S. national security. While Sputnik surprised and stunned American scientists and the person on the street, at the Pentagon, those tasked with the country's defense were far more concerned that the same rocket technology might also be used to deliver nuclear warheads to American cities. The ramifications of the Sputnik launch forced the U.S. military and the Eisenhower White House into the realization that ICBMs were the not only the future of strategic warfare, but the very near future.

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In light of this dangerous development, U.S. strategic missile programs were granted high-priority status by the Pentagon, and undertaken with an unrelenting sense of urgency. The first two U.S. ICBMs—the Atlas-D model, carrying a 1.44 megaton warhead—were placed on alert on October 31.1959, at Vandenberg AFB, California. Eventually, there were six Atlas-Ds deployed at Vandenberg, 15 at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, and nine at Offutt AFB, Nebraska. All of these early ICBMs were designed to be launched at ground-level, and were completely exposed and unprotected from possible enemy attack. Understanding their vulnerability, designers placed later generations of strategic missiles underground in hardened steel and concrete launchers.

The Soviets also worked feverishly to put their own strategic rocket force in place. Prior to the development of the ICBM, it would have taken several hours for Russian long-range bombers to reach the U.S. However, once deployed, the Soviets' nuclear-tipped missiles would be able to cover the distance in less than thirty minutes.

Even worse, following the introduction of submarine-launched missiles, only a few years later, the Soviets could launch a massive nuclear strike just off America's shores. Such an attack would reduce the time- to-target to an almost unimaginable eight to ten minutes, in the case of cities located on or near the East and West Coasts. Consequently, whether threatened by land or sea-based ICBMs, compared to the strategic bomber era, the window the U.S. would have available to prepare for imminent nuclear destruction, while simultaneously attempting to launch a retaliatory strike, would be greatly diminished.

Furthermore, in the pre-ICBM era of nuclear warfare, at least some of the Soviets' bombers would have been intercepted and destroyed by U.S. aircraft, before they could deliver their deadly payloads. However, no such defense was possible against strategic ballistic missiles, at least at that time. Theoretically, all of Russia's nuclear warheads would be delivered on target, with no hope of interception. Of course, the Soviet Union would be equally vulnerable our own ICBMs and their country would also be totally devastated in an all-out nuclear exchange.

Apparently, those piloting the UFOs took notice of this ominous state of

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affairs and, as a growing body of evidence confirms, decided to monitor—-and even occasionally tamper with—both U.S. and Soviet nuclear missiles. I understand that this assertion is difficult for many people to accept. Nevertheless, throughout the remainder of this book, the former and retired U.S. Air Force witnesses themselves will describe, in their own words, UFO activity at ICBM sites.

In any case, following the deployment of ICBMs in the U.S, UFOs began to be sighted as they maneuvered near, and hovered over our missile launch facilities. For example, within days of the first two Atlas-Ds going on alert at Vandenberg AFB, local newspapers were reporting civilian UFO sightings in the surrounding populated areas.[1]

Later sightings at other Air Force bases were to be far more dramatic. As will be discussed, in 1964, UFOs reportedly hovered, at low altitude, directly above Atlas missile sites outside Walker AFB, New Mexico. These incidents occurred repeatedly, at various silos, over a period of months.

With this ICBM-related activity, the UFO-Nukes Connection entered a new, but probably predictable phase. These highly-sensitive incidents would seem to be a logical continuation of the previously-noted UFO sightings around atomic and thermonuclear weapons sites in the 1940s and ‘50s. In any case, as the 1960s progressed, ICBM-related UFO incidents were to become far more astonishing and dramatic—not to mention ominous, from the Pentagons point of view—than anything that had gone before.

The reality of these startling encounters has been confirmed, often in great detail, in declassified—and occasionally leaked—U.S. Air Force records. Regrettably, although many of these documents were available to the public as long ago as the late 1970s, I have discovered that relatively few Americans are even aware of their existence.

In addition to the written records, dozens of former USAF missile personnel who were directly or indirectly involved in UFO incidents at ICBM sites have now discussed those incidents with researchers, often providing dramatic details not contained in the declassified files. Since 1973, I have personally interviewed nearly 100 of these individuals, ranging from retired colonels to former airmen. Many of these ex-military sources will be quoted at length in this chapter and others.

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As was noted in the introduction of this book, U.S. Air Force personnel whose jobs involve nuclear weapons are carefully screened and rigorously trained, to insure that only the most dependable and psychologically- stable individuals are allowed access to these weapons of mass destruction. In view of this fact, it is highly significant that several dozen former USAF nuclear missile launch, targeting, maintenance, and security personnel have now independently disclosed their knowledge of UFO activity at ICBM installations, near various Air Force bases, over a four-decade period.

According to most of these sources, the Air Force immediately classified any information related to the UFO events, often at a very high level. This strict censorship was usually imposed by Air Force investigators—usually OSI agents—who interrogated the witnesses, asked them to sign national security non-disclosure statements, and warned them of severe penalties for those who failed to remain silent about the incidents. Nevertheless, despite the official efforts to suppress open discussion about the classified sightings, decades later, many of the witnesses have finally come forward, sometimes reluctantly, to reveal their involvement in the incidents.

As we shall see, various declassified documents confirm, either partially or entirely, many of these eyewitness accounts. 'I he files further reveal that during some of the sightings the UFOs had also been tracked on radar and even pursued, although unsuccessfully, by Air Force jet fighters, once the objects' presence near the nuclear weapons sites had been verified by radar personnel.

The most dramatic of these ICBM-related incidents involved still-unexplained malfunctions in the guidance and control systems of one or more missiles, just as terrified security guards were frantically reporting one or more UFOs nearby. These disruptions—dubbed "going off alert status" by the Air Force—have been reported by former missile launch and targeting officers, as well as maintenance personnel, and quite obviously impacted overall national security to some degree.

However, before discussing these particular incidents which, as far as is known, began to occur in the mid-1960s, let's go back a few years to the earliest reported UFO incidents at ICBM sites.

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The Other Roswell Incidents

So far as is known, based on eyewitness testimony, it appears that the first confirmed UFO sightings at nuclear missile sites occurred near Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico, over a several-month period in 1963 and 1964.

Years earlier, in 1947, when it was named Roswell Army Air Held, the base had briefly received international attention after its commander publicly announced that a crashed "flying disc" had been recovered nearby. Later, from 1962 to 1965, Walker AFB was home to the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron, which ultimately controlled 12 first-generation Atlas ICBMs. To maximize their survival in the event of a Soviet attack, the Air Force isolated the missile sites from one another, installing them miles apart in the barren desert terrain surrounding Roswell.

In June 2001, *Florida Today* newspaper columnist Billy Cox wrote an article titled, "UFOs Haunt Missile Crew", in which he reported on mysterious sightings that had occurred at some of Walker AFBs Atlas ICBM sites.[2] Cox had interviewed three former Air Force missile personnel stationed at the base, who revealed startling details about the eerie incidents.

Jerry C. Nelson, had been a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander at an Atlas silo designated Site 9, located west of Roswell. He told Cox that on several occasions unidentified aerial craft had silently maneuvered above the site. "The guards were scared," said Nelson, "These objects would hover over the silo and shine lights down on them without making any noise. So I'd call the base and the base would say, 'We'll take it under advisement,' but I never got a chance to see [the UFOs], because I couldn't leave my post."[3]

After reading Cox's article, I called each of the individuals interviewed by him, in an effort to learn more about the incidents. Jerry Nelson confirmed the accuracy of Cox's story and said that, at recent reunions of the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron, he had heard strikingly similar accounts of sightings near silos from other former missile launch personnel. When I asked him if he recalled how many incidents he had personally been involved in at Site 9, he replied, "probably more than three but fewer than ten" over a

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period of a month or so. He also remembered that the sightings had occurred "at least six months, maybe more like a year" after the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, when the squadron had been placed on high-alert. He recalled that the weather had been cold and, therefore, estimated that the sightings occurred either late in the winter of 1962/63 or, more probably, during the winter of 1963/64.

Nelson emphasized that because he was a deputy missile commander, he could not leave his post in the underground launch capsule to go up and look at the UFOs. Regardless, during each incident, he had been impressed by the security guards' obvious fear as they reported a strange, silent object hovering above the silo. "I could tell they weren't pulling anybody's leg," he said, "Their voices were actually trembling." He added, I do remember that several different guards were involved [on different occasions) and all reacted in a similar manner."[4]

More disturbing to Nelson was the base's reaction to the UFO sightings. He was puzzled and frustrated by the missile operations center's casual indifference toward the urgent reports he had repeatedly phoned- in. Only years later did he learn that another individual at Site 9 had in fact been interviewed about the incidents by investigators from the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI). Apparently, the missile command centers deliberate nonchalance toward Nelson masked an active, if low-key, inquiry into the sightings at the silo.

Bob Caplan, another former member of the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron, was the person who had been interviewed by AFOSI. As mentioned in Billy Cox' *Florida Today* article, Caplan had been a missile facilities technician, and had witnessed yet another mysterious incident at Atlas Site 9.

As Cox reported, Caplan had been on duty one night when the guard called the site commander to request that the security lights be dimmed so that he could more clearly see a peculiar light which had suddenly appeared just beyond the site's security fence. The commander complied, and then ordered Caplan to leave the underground launch capsule to help investigate. Once outside, he quickly located the guard, who appeared to be badly frightened. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, Caplan quickly located the strange light.

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I interviewed Caplan in 2003, and he provided me with additional details relating to his experience. “It was on the western perimeter fence line, just outside the complex,” he told me. Caplan said that, upon further reflection, he realized that the light “was neither white nor intense as I have reported before. It was more of a yellowish color and somewhat dim. Not extremely dim, but hardly bright. It wasn’t pulsing. It was circular and flat to the ground, like the beam of a flashlight would look on the ground without the beam. It was, maybe, 6-inches in diameter, not a lot more. It was very flat to the ground, it was not three-dimensional at all. Think of a piece of paper laying on a table.”

Because former launch officer Jerry Nelson had reported UFOs directing spot-lights down on Atlas Site 9 on several occasions, I asked Caplan if the circular light might have been projected on the ground b' something from above. He responded, “The skies were very dark with the [security] lights off. There was no moon to be seen. I didn’t see anything in the sky that would lead me to believe that the light came from that direction. I must say that I didn’t spend a lot of time looking up, the show was on the ground. However, if something was up there and had any light at all, it would have stuck out like a sore thumb.”

As the two men nervously approached the light, they directed their flashlights onto it, whereupon it immediately disappeared. Moments later, it reappeared some 20-30 feet away. Caplan and the guard once again trained their flashlights on the elusive intruder, at which point it vanished without a trace. Unsettled and mystified, Caplan returned to the launch capsule and reported the details of his curious encounter.

Apparently, this incident did not go unnoticed by the missile squadron’s command personnel., because shortly afterward, Caplan had been ordered to report to Walker AFBs Office of Special Investigations, where he was interviewed about it by an agent on duty.

Caplan also confirmed that the incident at Site 9 had been only one of a series of similar sightings at the missile sites over a several month period in, he estimated, 1963. However, he declined to discuss the other cases because he was not personally present when they had taken place. Nevertheless, he did acknowledge that he had been aware of instances in which officers had

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acknowledged being involved in one UFO incident or another, but later denied that anything unusual had occurred. Said Caplan, “Those kinds of things were kept very quiet.”

He also confirmed that, on another occasion during that period, he had witnessed a fast-moving, erratically-maneuvering light in the sky. “It was star-like,” he recalled, “very high up, and moving at high speed. At one point, it moved across a quarter of the sky in a couple of seconds, stopped dead, reversed its course, stopped again, then moved off at a 45- degree angle [to its last course]. There is no aircraft that can do what that object was doing.” This sighting occurred, not at one of the Atlas sites, but on Walker AFB itself, and involved many witnesses. Caplan was later told by a member of the base’s 6th Combat Defense Squadron—an elite security police unit—that the UFO had been tracked on radar and chased by jet fighters. Because there were no fighters stationed at Walker at that time, Caplan guessed that they had been scrambled from Holloman Air Force Base, located some 100 miles southwest of Roswell.

Another former member of the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron, Airman 1st Class Tom Kaminski, also reports watching an intriguing UFO display—similar to the one mentioned above—while living on base. Like Caplan, Kaminski had also been an Atlas missile facilities technician.

“At least half of my barracks saw this,” he said, “It was at night and there were two or three lights—possibly four or five—that were moving around in the sky. They looked like stars but, from time to time, they did 90-degree turns. Not all at once though—they moved independently. They obviously knew that they wouldn’t run into each other. I don’t understand why we didn’t hear any sonic booms. That bothers me. They stayed in the same general area [of the sky]. After about 15 minutes, zoom, they were gone.”

Then he added, “Actually, [sightings of UFOs] were fairly common on base. I think that a lot of guys saw them. It wasn’t something that you discussed.”

But the incident at the barracks was not Kaminski’s only UFO sighting. He recalled, “Once I was at one of the Atlas sites northeast of the base, sometime in 1964, possibly 1965. We were down in the launch capsule when we got a call from the security guard, who said that he saw some unusual lights

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moving in the sky. The missile commander, Captain D------, took the call and told me to go topside to sec what I could see. I asked the guard to point out the lights. They were west-southwest of us, and looked like stars. At first, they didn't seem unusual but, a little while later, two of the 'stars' begin to move in unison. They shifted directions several times, but they stayed in that general area in the sky."

When Kaminski called Captain D------ to report his observations, the missile commander had news. "He said he had notified the base [about the lights], and was told that they had them on radar, and were sending up two fighters to investigate. So, I stayed topside and, about five minutes later, I could see two other lights coming from the direction of the base and moving toward the first two lights. I assumed they were the fighters. As they approached the unidentified lights, [the UFOs] began to move north, again in unison. The two fighters closed on, but could not catch, the lights." Kaminski said that shortly thereafter, the UFOs flew into some Cumulus clouds, followed the jets. A few seconds later, the jets emerged from the cloud bank but the UFOs were no longer visible. "That was that," he said, "and the jets went back to base."

The next morning, upon returning to Walker AFB, Kaminski and the other members of his missile team were routinely debriefed. "During the briefing," he recalled, "my captain asked, 'Whatever happened to the two UFOs?' The response was, 'What UFOs?' My captain said, 'The ones you sent the fighters up after!' They said, 'We didn't sent up any fighters.'" Said Kaminski, "We knew that was the end of that conversation!"

The third person quoted in Billy Cox's *Florida Today* article was Gene Lamb, who had been a deputy crew commander at several of the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron's Atlas sites. I conducted a telephone interview with Lamb in December 2002, in which he acknowledged the UFO sightings at ICBM silos outside Walker AFB, and estimated that they had occurred sometime during the period 1962 through 1964.

Lamb said that while he had not personally witnessed any of the incidents, he had spoken with one missile crew commander who had. This individual stated, decades later, that he had briefly left his launch capsule to go topside to observe strange aerial lights that were being frantically reported by the

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silo's guards. According to Lamb, the officer said that the lights "gave him the creeps. They were fast and they were moving in different directions." He told Lamb that he was familiar with all types of aircraft but had never seen anything like the extraordinary display in the sky above the Atlas silo. "These were not just lights," he emphasized, "This was something else."

"People talked about [the sightings] at Happy Hour, after work, or after we got off-site," said Lamb, "but it was kept pretty quiet as far as official statements went. To my knowledge, we were never briefed about it as a unit."

Lamb said that after he was contacted about the UFO incidents by reporter Billy Cox in 2001, he had mentioned the subject to a few of his former unit's missile crew members. The response that he got surprised him. Said Lamb, "Some people were still reluctant to talk about it."

Perhaps some, but not all. In March 2005, retired USAF Lt. Col. Philip E. Moore agreed to tell me about his own UFO experience at Walker AFB. At the time of the incident, Moore had been a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC), and was on duty in one of the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron's underground launch capsules.

Moore told me. "It was late at night. My crew was on alert at 579 Site 7 in late 1964, when my crew commander, Major Dan Gilbert, and I got a call from one of our 'sister' sites. The other missile crew said that a UFO was alternately hovering over their site, rapidly moving away, then returning."

He continued, "It was Major Gilbert who took the call, most likely from the other MCCC. I believe it was Site 6 that called, but it might have been Site 8. Sites 6, 7, and 8 were in a cluster south-southeast of Roswell. My rough estimate is that the sites were 10 to 15 miles apart. The sighting could have been made by a guard or enlisted crew member at the other site. There were items on the Silo Cap requiring periodic checks and an enlisted crew member might have been 'topside' at the time. But I don't know whether it was a guard or enlisted crew member at the other site who initially saw the UFO. My statistical guess is that it was a guard, because one was on duty there 24 hours-a-day."

"I was a first lieutenant at the time, one of three crew members certified to monitor the launch console. Any two of the three were required to stay at the console at all times, so Major Gilbert sent our enlisted crew members—

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Technical Sergeant Jack Nevins, Airman 1st Class Bob Garner, and Airman 1st Class Mike Rundag—up to the Silo Cap, at ground level, to see what they could."

"They reported the UFO zooming from the direction of Site 6 to the direction of Site 8 and hovering for awhile at the end of the movement. I recall my crew members saying that the hovering was instantaneous. At times, it hovered over Site 6, then flew extremely rapidly to the other site, and instantly stopped and hovered in-place over that one. I can't remember how many round-trips were involved. I'm not sure if anyone was even able to count because of the various crew members coming and going during the show. They all described it as a silent light that moved extremely rapidly—instant go and instant stop, no getting up to speed or slowing down. Unfortunately, no binoculars were available."

Moore continued, "The common comment I remember was that everyone thought it was a UFO, and that it was hovering directly over Sites 6 and 8 and nowhere else. Thus, it was specifically interested in those sites."

When I asked Moore whether the crew members had been certain that the UFO was stopping directly over the other missile sites—given their estimated 10 to 15-mile distance from Site 7—he responded, "They assumed that the hovering was directly over the sites, because the crew commander who called us said that it was definitely over his site. After awhile, Major Gilbert ordered Nevins to sit at the console with me and he went topside. He saw the same activity. During the event, the UFO did not come to our site. By the time my turn came to go topside, the show was over, so I didn't see anything."

I then asked Moore how he had determined the approximate date of the incident. He replied, "Major Gilbert became our Missile Combat Crew Commander in mid-to-late '64, and the UFO event occurred after he had been the commander for a few months, so I think that it was during October, November, or December 1964."

I asked Moore if he and his crew were debriefed about the incident. He responded, "Our report to the Walker Command Post got the similar ho- hum response that (former Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander) Jerry Nelson described to you. We were never debriefed, never warned not to discuss it, nor was it discussed beyond crew member-to-crew member. In

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other words, there was no official discussion or acknowledgment. It seemed to be ignored above crew-level. But some of us crew members discussed it freely. I suspect that the majority of those who didn't were folks who either didn't believe in UFOs, or didn't want to get involved, or were the kind who don't open up about controversial things. But the four eyewitnesses weren't sensationalists. All of them saw the UFO, and I completely trusted their word about it. Over the years, I've lost track of Rundag and Garner, but Jack Nevins is alive and well in California. He was at the Roswell Reunion."

Moore provided me with Nevins' email address, so I wrote to him and asked about the incident in question. He replied, "I recall going up to the silo cap one evening to check out a strange light observed by the security guard and our crew's power production technician, Mike Rundag. Our crew commander, Major Gilbert, asked me to go topside and confirm what the others had seen. I observed a bright light to the east of our location quite a distance away, sometimes hovering then moving quickly to the right, then to the left, as if searching the area below. I recall the light moved in a darting motion, seemed to hover, then moved rapidly to a new location. This went on for several minutes before I returned to the below ground control center. Some might say that this [sighting] could be explained as distant headlight lights from an oncoming vehicle reflecting off low clouds. This was not possible as the night was crystal clear with no clouds. But I cannot say I saw a UFO, only a light in the sky."

When I reported these comments to Moore, he said, "Site 6 was further east than our site. If you stood on the Site 7 cap and looked south, Site 6 would be to the left and Site 8 would be slightly to the right." I then asked Moore if he remembered hearing any rumors about unusual missile malfunctions at Sites 6 and 8, over which the UFO presumably hovered at the time of the incident. He said, "I don't recall the mention of equipment at the other sites being affected by the UFO. Certainly none of our Site 7 equipment was affected." The purpose of this particular question will become clearer to the reader in a later chapter.

Referring to some of the other former members of the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron who have gone on-the-record about the UFO sightings at Walker AFB, Moore added, "Jerry Nelson, Gene Lamb, and Bob Caplan are friends. All of those guys are solid citizens, stable, and have intact faculties

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and memories. They are definitely not kooks. I consider myself in the same category, and I'm not a kook either. I think you know why | said that. There are folks who haven't experienced UFOs who too quickly judge folks like Jerry, Gene, Bob, you, and me."

Moore concluded, "I personally believe that there is something to the UFO-ICBM connection. I know the Air Force covers-up when it feels the official need. UFOs over ICBM sites could be one of those official needs."

This sentiment was echoed by Roger T. Goss, who told me "I was a member of the 6th Combat Defense Squadron from September 1962 through June 1964. The first year, as an Airman 3rd Class, I worked on the flight line, which included guarding B-52s in the 'Quickstrike' alert area. Quickstrike was our own code word for the area, which we used primarily for radio communications, but it was also used on the daily roster which listed our post assignments. You know that these alert B-52s were uploaded with hydrogen bombs, and 'pre-flighted', so they could he rolled-out to the runway in a very few minutes.

I also guarded the MMS (Munitions Maintenance Squadron) facility—the bunkers where nuclear weapons were stored. The Air Force has never acknowledged the existence of nuclear weapons. We never used word 'nuclear in open communications. It was called the special weapons area or MMS.

In June 1963, I was promoted to Airman 2nd Class and, later that summer, assigned to missile duty. I worked at [Atlas] Site 9 many times.

As for missile site UFO sightings, two guards worked topside at all times. I was topside at Site 9 for two incidents involving fast-moving lights that appeared to move rapidly and change direction rapidly. They were sharp, abrupt changes in direction, not the curved flight-path of a jet making a turn. It was this rapid, erratic movement that prompted me to report the sighting to the Launch Control Capsule. The lights also hovered, but we never heard any noise at any time.

The UFOs were never more than points of light. During one of the sightings, they were close to being overhead—an array of four lights, changing their relationship with each other, as opposed to being fixed in a group. There was no way to judge their distance, but they had the brightness

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of B-52 landing lights at 2-3 miles out, which is something l saw countless times at the Quickstrike alert ramp, on the south end of the main runway at Walker. There was no strong color to the light, but it was more yellow than pure white.

We reported both of the sightings to the Launch Commander from the post phone installed at the access gate. The commander's formal title was Missile Combat Crew Commander, but we called all of them Launch Commanders. On each occasion, the LC told us to ignore the lights because they were military aircraft. In one case, that information came from a duty officer at SAC headquarters in Omaha. The other time it came from the Base Command Post. While [we were] on-site the Launch Commander was in charge and we followed his orders. So when he said to ignore the lights, that was final."

I then asked Goss, "Didn't it strike you as odd when the LC told you that an officer in Omaha—hundreds of miles away—had positively identified the lights that you were seeing? Did you just assume that SAC headquarters was indeed monitoring military aircraft on radar and, therefore, knew the facts? Or, on the other hand, did you think that the explanation was BS, but just let it go?"

Goss replied, "It felt like BS, but remember, we reported unusual activity to the LC and he decided what to do. He could tell us to ignore a given incident, or report it to the BCC—the base command post. If he did report it to the BCC, they could tell him to ignore it, or report it up to SAC Headquarters. SAC HQ could tell the BCC to ignore it, or take further action, like locking-down the site or initiating other security procedures."

I asked Goss, "So, are you saying that even though you didn't buy the 'military aircraft' explanation for the lights, during any situation involving a potential threat to the site, a call from Omaha was itself not that unusual? He replied, "Yes, I know SAC HQ had been notified on several occasions and responded back to BCC."

Goss continued, "I would estimate that my sightings at Site 9 were 2-3 weeks apart. I remember it was cold which means that it was the winter of 1963-64, bur I can't remember a specific month. We were never officially debriefed about the incidents.

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Other guards had similar experiences at Site 9 and at other sites. Some guards from my flight—that is, my shift—told me of seeing the same lights I saw, at the same time, while they were posted at other sites. Also, other flights at Site 9 had similar sightings. There were also sightings on base—always at night—but always just a light, never a solid object."

I asked Goss if he had ever heard about any of the missiles going off-alert—malfunctioning—around the time of the UFO sightings. He responded, "Never an incident where a site went 'off-alert' due to a sighting but, rather, to maintenance problems."

I asked Goss to give me his assessment of the lights he had seen, in hindsight, some forty years later. He replied, "Well, to me, they were unidentified, as they were strange and seemed to defy normal aircraft flight characteristics." Goss chose not to speculate about their possible origin.

Finally, I asked Goss if he recalled any sightings—or had heard any rumors of sightings from other guards—-while he was working the flight line, before he was assigned to the Atlas sites. He replied, "Yes, I believe it was in the fall of 1962, after the Cuban Missile Crisis and, I think, into 1963. I was not on duty for those sightings, but they were similar to my experience at Site 9. Some of the guards who were on duty on base reported lights in the sky which sounded similar to those I observed."

Significantly, a letter written in 1964 has come to light which almost entirely substantiates the 40-year-old memories of the former Atlas missile personnel whom I interviewed. Written by an Air Force missile facilities technician who was stationed at Walker AFB at that time, it describes in detail multiple ICBM-related UFO incidents—just after they had occurred. A copy of the letter was sent to me by researcher Jan Aldrich.

On December 20, 1964, Airman 2nd Class Barry L. Krause wrote to the civilian UFO research organization, NICAP, to inform the group of several spooky—and apparently highly classified—incursions by mysterious aerial objects near the base's missile sites.[5] (NICAP—the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena—was at that time the foremost UFO research group in the country. Its director, U.S. Naval Academy graduate and retired Marine Major Don Keyhoe, had openly and repeatedly called for congressional investigations into government secrecy surrounding the subject

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of UFOs. At various times, the organization had on its Board of Governors such persons as retired Vice-Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, who was later the first director of the CIA, and retired Rear Admiral D. H. Fahrney, who served as the chief of the Navy's first guided missile program.)

In his letter to NICAP, Krause wrote, "I am attached to the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron. We support the Atlas 'F' which is located in this area. There has [sic] been, and still are, frequent sightings of U.F.O.'s at the missile [sites]. At one of our sites in particular, there are recurring sightings...the site in question is site eight, located south of Roswell N. Mex. on route 285."[6]

Krause continued, "Some of the people in our squadron thought the guards were seeing things until, one night an E.P.PT. (Electrical Power Production Tech.) on one of the Combat Crews on duty that night went on the silo cap for some fresh air. He sighted a strange light in the Western sky. The light was doing weird movements...He went in the silo and told the Missile Combat Crew Commander what he had seen. The Commander called the S.A.C. command post. While he was reporting the incident S.A.C. headquarters came in on the line and was listening. They told the command post that they had a KC-135 in the area (a KC-135 is the jet tanker employed by the Air Force) and that they would deploy it to the area in which the object was located. Just shortly after the KC-135 flew over the site to get his heading, the U.F.O. shot out of sight."[7]

Krause then mentions another incident and the apparent secrecy surrounding it, "Some people might not believe a guard of the lowly airman ranks, but one night a Lt. Col. sighted [a] U.F.O. and was telling how he saw it with his own eyes. After someone put the word to him he wouldn't tell anyone about it."[8]

Krause concluded his letter to NICAP: "There have been sightings at most of our missile sites. It got so bad the guards were afraid to go on guard duty...My roommate and I talk to the guards and try to learn everything we can. We gave up on trying to look at the incident report[s] at the sites. Every time we tried, they told us that [they were top secret and [we] couldn't read them. So, we have to go by word of mouth. That is about all I know at this moment."[9]

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Upon learning of the existence of this letter, I attempted to locate Krause and sought the assistance of others in this effort. Two individuals—former 579th SMS member Bob Caplan, and a private investigator—independently discovered that he had died in September 1973.

In summary, Krause's contemporary letter confirms that several different UFO-related incidents had indeed occurred at Walker AFB's Atlas missile silos in the early 1960s. It also mentions alleged efforts to silence witnesses, notes that the security guards involved were badly frightened by the UFOs, and reveals that the Air Force had apparently classified the incidents "Top Secret". In other words, the letter substantiates much of the information provided to researchers much more recently by other former members of the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron.

UFO Sightings at Other Atlas ICBM Sites

The events at Walker AFB described by Barry Krause were apparently not unique. I have interviewed two individuals who reported UFOs near Atlas missile silos at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, during the early 1960s. Between 1958 and 1961, retired USAF Master Sergeant Harold J. Renninger had been a launch facilities technician at Atlas missile Site 1, outside FE Warren AFB. In 2005, he told me, "At the time, I was a Staff Sergeant assigned to the 564th Strategic Missile Squadron. I heard many stories from friends and co-workers about unexplained aerial phenomena in the early sixties. But there was an Air Force regulation [AFR 35-99] that dealt with human reliability, and none of the crew members wanted to be subjected to screening under the terms of that reg. That is why we always treated discussions of UFOs as a joke. When working around a nuclear weapon, the last thing you wanted to do was let anyone know you were seeing UFOs."

Renninger continued, "The Security Police were the ones who would have been more likely to witness UFO activity, or strange lights. But I did have one UFO sighting myself. This incident occurred even before we became operational at the first Atlas site, so the date must have been March or April

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of 1960. One night there was a bright light just above the dirt landing strip at Site 1. I was outside Launch Control Facility A, along with a Security Policeman who was on perimeter guard. We were just standing there talking when we both saw the light. It was visible probably for two or three minutes and was extremely bright. I am a pilot, and I've never seen a landing light that bright. There was no noise associated with the light."

Renninger recalled, "I asked the SP what the light was and he said it was the Helio Courier, which the Air Force was testing as a [missile] site courier. It was a small turbine-powered, single engine STOL [Short Take-Off and Landing] airplane that could carry maybe six people. [If the light had actually been the Courier] it should have flown the length of the runway and then pulled-up. But it didn't do that. The light just went out. There was only one really bright light, no position lights that are standard for aircraft."

Renninger added, added, "I remember other SPs talking about unusual aerial lights on previous occasions but, until that night, I never really paid that much attention to them."

Later on, after Site I had become operational, Renninger witnessed other odd events. "I remember seeing bright lights in the sky," he said, "when I would go outside the launch facility late at night to take pressure readings on the helium and nitrogen skids. At the time, I thought they were helicopters, but I never heard any noise. I thought they may have been directing spot lights at the site. I figured it was some sort of aerial security measure. They looked to be close to the ground. I remember thinking they must have been on really important missions, to be flying in such bad weather, cold and snowy. There were multiple lights on several occasions—five or six—and on another occasion there was only one. But it was much brighter and much closer."

I asked Renninger if those lights had any shape to them, or if he could remember the approximate dates of the various sightings. He replied, "I am afraid too much time has past for me to remember the details of those light sightings." Then he added, "I don't think the information you are seeking will be found in the documents that have been declassified. I think the information is in the classified documents."

A second source has confirmed the presence of UFOs at F.E. Warren

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AFB's Atlas missile sites. Airman First Class Arthur McEnaney, was an Air Policeman assigned to the 809th Combat Defense Squadron, which provided security for the 566th Strategic Missile Squadron at F.E. Warren AFB. In August 1964, McEnaney and his fellow guards sighted a UFO above the four-silo Atlas launch complex they were patrolling. "We were at Site 1, Pad 1," said McEnaney, "Around midnight we saw an object hovering over the site. It was round and shone brightly. After we reported it to the NCOIC (Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge), we were informed that interceptors had been dispatched from Denver and reported it to be a weather balloon. The only problem with that explanation was that no aircraft were seen in the area, and we were later told to keep quiet about it as it was national security. Our NCOIC, Staff Sergeant Fred Coffer told us that."

Various models of the Atlas ICBM were deployed at other Strategic Air Command bases as well: Altus, Dyess, Fairchild, Forbes, Lincoln, Plattsburgh, and Schilling AFBs. I have attempted, unsuccessfully, to learn whether UFO sightings were also reported at those bases during the Atlas era. If they were, perhaps some of my readers will write to me about them, and provide details. My contact information appears in Appendix A.

Based upon information contained in declassified files, as well as the testimony of former Air Force nuclear missile personnel, it is now evident that the UFO sightings which occurred at the Atlas missile silos at Walker and F.E. Warren AFBs were merely the first in a four-decade-long series of such incidents at America's ICBM sites.

However, before discussing those later sightings, at Minuteman missile sites, one other incident involving an Atlas missile must be examined. It is in a class by itself, and ranks as one of the most important UFO cases I have ever investigated. At the time it occurred, the Air Force and the CIA classified it Top Secret, for reasons that should be obvious to the reader.

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8. Visitors

In situations where irrefutable, empirical evidence for a given point of view has yet to materialize, one is still permitted to express an opinion, or propose a hypothesis about the topic at hand, as long as one has extensively researched that topic.

In a previous chapter, I attempted to objectively describe the UFO phenomenon, as it has been reported and recorded, over the past six decades. Here, however, I openly express my own opinion about the nature of the UFO enigma, and begin with one fundamental premise: Based on the available data, limited though it may be, the phenomenon which has confronted and confounded us for so long, can best be explained as encounters with beings from another world or, perhaps, many worlds.

Indeed, if nothing else, the radar data alone suggest that this scenario has merit. I defy anyone to present verifiable evidence that the U.S. government, or any other government, was flying an aircraft in 1952 which could travel thousands of miles per hour, instantly make a right- angle turn, then continue on its way, unfazed by the impossibly violent maneuver. All of those things actually occurred in July of that year—more than once—and were verified by expert radar operators during the now- famous UFO over flights of Washington D.C.

At the time, the Chief Civil Aeronautics Administration Air Traffic Controller at National Airport, Harry Barnes, publicly confirmed that multiple radar tracks of unknown targets had correlated exactly with pilot reports of various UFOs' positions and flight paths. Barnes further confirmed that the UFOs had performed literally 90-degree turns, as well as 180-degree course changes—that is, instantaneous reversals of their direction of flight, with no turn per se. No known aircraft is capable of these feats, even today, nearly 60 years later. However they were achieved, it appears as if gravitational and inertial forces were suspended, resulting in no adverse effects to the craft or their presumed pilots. If this were not enough, one of the UFOs over Washington D.C. was tracked as it traveled at 7,000 miles per hour! At the time, the fastest American and Russian jet fighters could fly just

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under 700 m.p.h.

Although there now might be an experimental aircraft at some secret base in Nevada capable of these fantastic speeds and maneuvers, in 1952, humans had not yet built such a craft. After all, if we, or the Soviet Union, or any other nation, had our own UFOs decades ago—which were capable of executing right-angle turns at 1000 m.p.h., or instantaneously hovering in mid-air—why would we, or they, continue to manufacture fixed-wing aircraft which require, in some cases, a half-mile to turn in the air, and really long runways to roll to a stop?

Moreover, if either the U.S. or the Soviets possessed an advanced aircraft of the type that over flew the nations capital in 1952 then, at some point during the nearly 50-year-long Cold War, that aircraft would have certainly been unveiled in the most menacing manner possible, just as each country periodically flaunted its latest nuclear weapon systems, during that anxious era's recurring episodes of mutual saber-rattling.

If either of the superpowers had an aircraft that could travel thousands of miles per hour, and literally fly rings around the other's own airplanes, neither government would have waited until the nukes started falling to reveal such a weapon. Instead—if an American or a Russian UFO actually existed—the government possessing it most likely would have hoped that merely revealing its existence would be so intimidating that the enemy would stand down and reevaluate his own plans for nuclear war.

In an alternate, far more harrowing scenario, a superpower's UFOs, if they existed, could have been used preemptively, as a low-altitude platform to deliver nuclear bombs. Such an unexpected first strike—involving neither ICBMs, whose launch would be detected by long-range radar, nor high-altitude strategic bombers which would also be tracked—could have potentially neutralized the other's ability to launch its own nuclear weapons. Therefore, a nation possessing UFOs might conceivably be immune from nuclear attack.

In any event, neither the "flaunt-your-stuff" nor the "hit-'em-first" scenario ever played out during the Cold War era, providing additional evidence, in my view, that the mysterious intruders we call UFOs are not advanced man-made aircraft.

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Whatever their actual origin, the objects over Washington D.C- m 1952 were explained away by the U.S. Air Force as optical illusions and false radar returns caused by a weather phenomenon known as “temperature inversion.” However, this official explanation, hastily issued by public relations personnel at the Pentagon—and undoubtedly designed to calm public anxiety —was empirically discredited by meteorologists long ago.

Therefore, given the validity of the still-unexplained and utterly amazing radar data—in this, and hundreds of other UFO tracking cases—I suggest that bona fide UFOs are most likely piloted by beings from one or more technologically-advanced civilizations in our galaxy.

Not knowing the motivations of the beings who presumably pilot the UFOs, it is difficult to tag them with a label. Are they explorers? Scientists? Conquerors? Saviors? Or only nosy neighbors? For the moment, let’s just call them visitors. If they are indeed here and intend to reveal themselves to us one day, humankind will have entered into a new era, from which there would be no going back. Childhood’s End, as one author aptly called it. To say that the changes would be profound is an understatement. To truly know, once and for all, that humankind is not alone in the universe would transform every one of humanity’s collective self-concepts, in addition to providing the long-sought, elusive answer to anyone who has ever looked up at the stars and wondered about the existence of other worlds.

However, there are also other, less mystical considerations. If proof of alien visitation is realized, there will also be immediate and quite possibly dire consequences: For example, will the public panic, in every country? Even if only one in a hundred did so, that’s still a lot of humans running amok. Will Wall Street and other financial markets crash, and banks fail, as people rushed to withdraw their money while awaiting further developments? Will other catastrophic consequences, even short-lived ones, cause human civilization to teeter on the brink? We simply do not know.

The assumption that Earth is being visited by aliens immediately requires that one go back to basics and ask several fundamental questions: Who are they? Where do they come from? How do they get here? Why would they want to visit? Why have they not completely revealed themselves to us and, if they ever do, what will the reality of their existence and presence here

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mean to humankind?

Of course, there are even more questions: Are the beings piloting the UFOs from more than one planet? If so, do they all have the same agenda, regarding humans? If not, should we welcome one race but fear another? If all of this were not enough to ponder, given our own cutting-edge theories about the cosmos, we may also have to ask whether the visitors are from our own physical universe or, on the other hand, from another dimension of reality about which we have no knowledge.

Many questions, but no answers as yet. It seems evident that we will not have those answers until the visitors themselves provide them. A coordinated announcement by world governments, regarding the reality of extraterrestrial visitation, would start the ball rolling. However, even if such an announcement were to occur at some point, we may be disappointed to learn that our leaders know little more about the precise origins and motivations of the visitors than the person on the street.

At the very least, one would think that the U.S. government might share some of its classified information on UFOs, however limited its value, in conjunction with such a dramatic public announcement. On the other hand, that information might conceivably exacerbate public anxiety, rather than helping to alleviate it. If this were judged to be the case, then much of what our government, and other governments, know about UFOs might remain hidden indefinitely. Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that some other government would be more forthcoming than our own, despite the discord this might cause. Nevertheless, given Washington's pronounced lack of candor on UFOs thus far, this particular scenario is entirely likely. After all, since when has any policy ever been completely agreed upon by every major power on Earth? The policy relating to the disclosure of the presence of aliens will probably be no different.

Regardless of the imponderables, including what world governments may or may not know or do in the future, I argue that a public, grassroots effort must be made in the interim to understand—as best as possible, using the data gathered so far—the nature and intentions of those who pilot the UFOs.

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The Key Questions

1) Who are they?
2) How do they travel here?
3) Why are they here?
4) Is more than one alien race present?
5) Why do aliens reportedly look similar to humans?
6) Why has there been no open contact?
7) Why the official secrecy about UFOs?
8) What happens next?

Let's address each of the above questions, utilizing the available evidence, as well as inductive reasoning, to arrive at a few reasonable best-guesses. (I don't use the word "hypotheses" because, by definition, a hypothesis is testable. Obviously, this method of verification can not presently be achieved when attempting to answer the questions at hand.)

Who Are They?

First, who are the pilots? If UFOs are in fact spacecraft, this implies either remote-controlled operation or piloting, or perhaps both. Of the thousands of legitimate UFO sightings since 1947, only a comparative few have involved reports of observations of occupants associated with the craft. Here I am referring to the occasions when living beings, of one description or another, were observed either standing near or walking around a landed UFO, or sighted through the windows of the craft, either while it was hovering at low altitude, or stationary on the ground.

If we assume that at least some of these reports of UFO occupants have merit, it immediately becomes obvious that the witness descriptions of the beings differ, often dramatically. Skeptics argue that this is evidence that all

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of the reports are bogus or, at the very least, proves the point that different observers confronted with unfamiliar phenomena will usually report different things, owing to factors related to human perception and psychological conditioning. Therefore, these critics believe, no useful data can be compiled from these sightings of allegedly alien beings.

While acknowledging the potential validity of these objections—for example, 10 witnesses to a car crash will provide 10 slightly different accounts to the police—I will argue that another reasonable explanation would also account for the variation in witness descriptions of UFO occupants: More than one race of beings is operating here.

All of the beings observed are reportedly "humanoid" in appearance, meaning that their morphology is similar to ours: A head—having two eyes, a nose, a mouth, but usually no visible ears—attached to an upright body having two arms with hands and two legs with feet. However, beyond this basic physical structure, the details vary widely.

Reportedly, in some of the beings, the nose is only two nostrils, with no protrusion such as humans have, and the mouth is often described as merely a slit, with no lips. On the other hand, some beings reportedly have vestigial or even large, protruding noses and ears. A variety of skin colors have also been described, including pure white, whitish-gray, bluish white and light-to-dark brown. (To my knowledge, green skin has never been reported.) Skin textures reportedly range from flawlessly smooth to reptilian, with some beings having a decidedly lizard-like appearance. There are even a few reports, mostly from South America, of beings covered in dense hair or fur. Estimated heights, while usually described as diminutive—between three and four and a half feet—can also extend up to seven feet or even taller.

Of all features, the beings' eyes are often mentioned as the most striking, even frightening: Usually, they are reported to be large, slightly slanted, almond-shaped and black, having no white region as in human eyes. Sometimes, the outer corners of the eyes extend to the sides of the head. However, other beings reportedly have eyes similar to our own. Indeed, some of the "aliens" are described as appearing so human-like that they could be easily mistaken for our own species.

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How Do They Travel Here?

If some UFOs are indeed craft piloted by beings from one or more other planets, by what means do they get from their world(s) to ours? It is almost certain that the answer involves not only exotic propulsion systems, but exotic concepts as well. In essence, we are asking a two-part question First, how do the craft fly thousands of miles per hour but also seemingly defy gravity and inertial forces while operating in our atmosphere and, second, how do they cover the vast distances between their planet(s) and ours on a routine basis?

Any discussion of the propulsion systems of UFOs must take into consideration the possibility that they may differ widely. Even if only one extraterrestrial race is involved, the technology employed for long- range travel may not necessarily be the same one used for near-planetary observation. There are, in fact, a relative handful of UFO sighting cases which suggest a two-tier specialization of function. Although rare, these well-documented sightings involved enormous, cigar-shaped objects, frequently referred to as “motherships”, releasing and retrieving much smaller disc-shaped craft.

One such sighting was reported on August 23, 1954, near Vernon France. Among the witnesses were two local policemen and an army engineer, who described seeing in the sky a huge, silent, perfectly stationary cigar-shaped object standing on end. A fourth witness, businessman M Bernard Miserey, stated, “I had been watching this amazing spectacle tor a couple of minutes when suddenly from the bottom of the cigar came an object like a horizontal disk, which dropped at first in free fall, then slowed, and suddenly swayed and dived horizontally across the river toward me, becoming very luminous. For a very short time I could see the disk full-face.” After a few moments, three additional disks emerged, one after the other, at brief intervals, each racing away in different directions. Finally, after a longer interval, a fifth object emerged from the motionless cigar. “This last disk,” continued Miserey, “dropped much lower than the earlier ones...where it remained still for an instant, swaying slightly… After a few seconds’ pause, it wobbled like the last four, and took off like a flash to the north…”[1]

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Another such case has been reported by researcher Raymond Fowler, involving residents of Ipswich, Massachusetts, who reported witnessing a nearly identical display just offshore on September 17, 1966. However, in that sighting, several discs emerged from the top of the cigar-shaped object, as it hung motionless over the ocean.[2]

A third report of this type occurred on September 8, 1958, near Offutt AFB, Nebraska—Strategic Air Command Headquarters—and was observed by at least 25 Air Force personnel, including Major Paul A. Duich, who wrote, "… as we watched, there appeared at the lower end of the [pencil or slender cigar-shaped] object a swarm of black specks cavorting every which way, much like a swarm of gnats. This procedure continued for a minute or so before [the specks] disappeared. Then the object, which had hung motionless on the same spot, slowly changed attitude from an upright position to a 45-degree angle with the horizontal and started moving slowly toward the west..."[3]

Regarding the last sighting, given the other reports of this kind of UFO activity, it can reasonably be argued that, had the cigar-shaped object been closer to the observers, the specks would have appeared disc-shaped. Of course, this cannot be said with certainty.

(Another such mothership sighting, and radar tracking, in Idaho—not far from a major military nuclear engineering site—has been reported to me by a retired FAA air traffic controller, as I discuss in a later chapter.)

It has been suggested that one possible interpretation of these reports is that the classic "flying saucers" may be craft used by the visitors for operations within the atmospheres of planets, including ours, while the much larger cigar-shaped objects are transport vessels—similar to our own aircraft carriers—but designed for interstellar spaceflight or, perhaps, inter-dimensional travel. If this is the case, then the vast majority of UFOs reported —the discs, spheres, triangles and small cylinders, among other shapes—may not be "spacecraft" at all, at least not interstellar spacecraft, but near-planetary reconnaissance craft.

Many people ask: Regardless of the means of propulsion UFOs actually use, wouldn't the vast interstellar distances render even the most advanced systems ineffective, thereby ruling out viable travel between different solar

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systems?

Generally, the longstanding contention by scientists has been that any alien beings coming here from their own world would have to reside in a nearby solar system—and would probably use suspended animation or engage in multi-generational sojourns—simply because of the vast distances involved in interstellar travel.

The long-held belief that aliens would have to be from nearby solar systems is predicated on the assumption that any beings, anywhere in the cosmos, would be restricted to sub-light-speed travel, as decreed by Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity. Consequently, it has been argued, given the vast distances between even neighboring stars (and their respective solar systems) interstellar travel would, of necessity, be a rather limited proposition for any given race of intelligent beings, involving journeys—each taking many years—to destinations relatively near to their own planet.

However, as we shall see in the chapter titled, "Warped and Hyper", radical proposals by our own theoretical physicists over the last two decades, regarding the nature of the cosmos—if proved—would utterly abolish the hypothetical sub-light-velocity limitation.

For the moment, I will simply say it now appears that assumptions about a light barrier may be as faulty as our earlier concerns about a sound barrier, which would have theoretically limited the top speed aircraft might achieve. Until this concept was disproved by test pilot Chuck Yeager, in 1947, it was supposed that passing through the "barrier" would cause airplanes to disintegrate.

Similarly, the once nearly universal (or, at least, human) belief in n light-speed barrier for space travelers has been under serious scientific challenge for over 20 years. Simply put, faster-than-light (FTL) travel is now believed by many theorists to be possible. If this is ultimately verified, it will be scientifically-viable to argue that extraterrestrials, assuming that they're out there, might come from the far reaches of our galaxy, or even from other galaxies. Indeed, according to the more exotic of the theories now being proposed, alien visitors might even come from parallel universes or other dimensions of reality. Furthermore, if time travel is possible, some of our own theorists suggest, the visitors might be from another time—or perhaps

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even humans from the future.

Let's assume for the moment that the theoretical UFO pilots are not future humans, are not from one of the relatively nearby planets within our own solar system, and do not have bases on any of them from which they operate. Let's also assume that their interplanetary journeys are not predicated upon multigenerational flight plans—whereby those who initially depart their home die long before reaching their destination, leaving the arrival on another world to their heirs.

These exceptions aside, any extraterrestrial visitors to Earth must have necessarily discovered a way to travel between different solar systems in a reasonably short period of time. If an alien spaceship can indeed effectively move faster-than-light (FTL), then the journey from another solar system to ours immediately becomes a feasible undertaking, at least as regards the time required to do it. Furthermore, if the theoretical velocities involved are many times light-speed, then interstellar excursions might be no more formidable than our own flights to the Moon. In fact, it is conceivable that a faster-than-light, or superluminal, trip from another world to ours would take no longer than an airplane flight from New York to Los Angeles. Amazingly, some theorists now believe that interstellar travel might require only a few seconds, as impossible as that idea may seem at first glance.

Why Are They Here?

If many alien races are operating here, they would probably have a variety of motivations for doing so. Some may be just passing through, on their way to other destinations. If so, they might engage in limited exploration and data-gathering while they are here. Other visitors may be long-term observers of our species, either for the purposes of scientific study or, conceivably, because they have some as-yet unknown relationship to humans, which may be nurturing, or antagonistic, or neither. We simply cannot know at this point in time.

However, given the persuasive data regarding the UFO-Nukes Connection, it seems obvious—at least to me and many other researchers—that one or

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more of the races of beings is highly interested in our nuclear weapons, and has gone so far as to interfere with their functionality, from time to time, for reasons that are still unclear.

Perhaps they have an empathy for humankind, and wish to warn us of the dangers of nuclear warfare. Or perhaps they have a use for our planet, let s say for scientific purposes, and know that global nuclear warfare will disrupt their data-gathering and/ or experiments. Even if they only use Earth as a stopover from their world(s) to their ultimate destination(s)—a man-made nuclear catastrophe might make our world unavailable to them for hundreds or thousands of years.

On the other hand, although I doubt this is the case, perhaps the aliens intend to discourage us, or even prevent us from using nukes because they plan to invade Earth one day and do not wish to inherit a planet polluted with radioactivity. Or perhaps they have a deep disdain for our savage race and are just here to watch us blow ourselves up. (Yikes! I bet you didn't think about those possibilities, did you?) Although it is important to consider all of the potential scenarios when speculating on this topic, in my view, the nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents presented in this book do not support the idea that something alarming is unfolding; rather they tend to suggest a concern for humanity's welfare.

I of course have an opinion about the visitors' motivations regarding our nuclear weapons, however, it is obvious that no one has the answers at the present time. For the moment, I will simply say that my research leads me to believe that the nuclear weapons-related UFO activity will someday be viewed as a positive development for mankind.

Is More Than One Alien Race Present?

If we accept that sightings of bona fide UFOs are in fact observations of alien spacecraft, to assume that only one advanced race in the galaxy has mastered interstellar travel seems a highly improbable proposition. In other words, if faster-than-light travel is indeed possible, it seems certain many different extraterrestrial civilizations have taken the plunge and explored

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space to the extent of their respective technological abilities.

I am among those who believe that many different alien races are operating here. If this is the case, one or more of them may wish to foster our future—with the occasional nudge, of one kind or another—while another race, or races, may have selfish, even insidious intentions toward humankind. Furthermore, still other races may simply be observant bur uninvolved anthropologists, studying our species for the sake of acquiring knowledge about other intelligent life forms.

Thousands of UFO sighting witnesses around the world have reported observing humanoid beings, of one description or another, standing or moving about in close proximity to the craft itself, or visible through it' windows. Because the descriptions of those beings vary widely, it seems reasonable to assume that they probably originate from different worlds. Given that our own theorists have now proposed various ways in which effective faster-than-light travel might be possible, we can probably assume that one or more advanced civilizations—perhaps hundreds, thousands or even millions of years older than our own—have also hypothesized the validity of FTL travel, presumably gone on to prove its reality, and then developed various technologies to take advantage of the mode. If this is indeed the case, some of our visitors might come from other galaxies in our own universe—or even from other universes, if they exist.

However, for the moment, lets confine our discussion to those theoretical space-faring races who hail from planets within our own Milky Way Galaxy. Given our current level of scientific understanding, what is the approximate number of advanced civilizations potentially traveling around this vast, whirling, disc-shaped collection of stars, planets and interstellar gas? One previously confidential study on UFOs, undertaken by the RAND Corporation, a U.S. Air Force-affiliated think tank, arrived at a truly staggering figure.

The report, issued in November 1968, was authored by RAND analyst George Kocher, and titled, *UFOs: What to Do?*. Appearing at the beginning of the document is this admonishment: DO NOT QUOTE OR CITE IN EXTERNAL RAND PUBLICATIONS OR CORRESPONDENCE.

Part 2 of the report, “UFOs—ASTRONOMICAL ASPECTS”, begins with

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a rather startling statement:

We saw in Part 1 that the historical aspects [of the problem] suggest an extraterrestrial explanation to UFOs. While it has not been established that the contemporary phenomena are extensions of the historical, there does seem to be a continuity in the descriptions of the phenomena described. We shall therefore look at contemporary astronomical knowledge and theories and ascertain the likelihood of the existence of other highly developed life forms…

Now let us just consider the stars in our own galaxy—specifically excluding those in neighboring or distant galaxies. We would like to estimate the number of stars having planets roughly similar to the Earth. From the statistics of stars within 15 light years of the sun we find that only about one-third are single, the rest binary or multiple. Since planetary orbits are often unstable in multiple systems (depending on the details of the configuration) we will say that only 30 billion stars in our galaxy now have a dynamical environment that permits planets to exist around them. Will these stars have planets?

We cannot state with assurance that they will; however, current knowledge supports the theory that planetary formation is a natural adjunct to formation of the star itself from the interstellar gas cloud.

We would therefore expect about 30 billion stars to have one or more planets. Now, we can reject certain classes of stars as candidates or habitable planets, because their lifetimes are too short (these are stars of high mass). Others can be rejected because of variability in light output, a characteristic that would make evolutionary development of life much more difficult. In fact if we select only those stars similar to the sun (whose peak of radiation energy coincides with a region of terrestrial atmospheric transparency) we have only a few percent of the total—about one in 30. Therefore, we would expect about 1000 million suitable solar type stars exist.

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Of these, it is estimated by various astronomers that 200-600 million have planets at about the right distance and have been around long enough that life forms as developed as our own could exist. Implicit in further discussion are the assumptions that:

1) Planets and/or life evolves to a mutual compatibility;

2) The life force, whether spontaneous or otherwise, is such that whenever the environment is favorable, life will exist;

3) Our own history of past evolution and development is neither slow nor fast, but average and typical for life forms. (Ours is the only example available and no one has yet demonstrated that the average' galactic life form should be any different.)

Now let us turn momentarily to time scales. The sun and earth are on the order of 5 billion years old… [while] the age of the galaxy is between 5 and 10 billion years; therefore, among the 200-600 million stars we would expect to have acceptable planets, some would be older than the sun, some younger… and some the same age.

It should be clear from assumption (3) and the example of our own development, that among the populated planets those younger than the sun would be peopled by beings very much behind us technologically, while those on older planets would be extraordinarily advanced (remember our progress of 500 years and note that some planets could be as much as a few billion years older). Indeed, we would be surprised to find someone else at just our stage of technological development. For the purposes of this paper, we can ignore both the multitude younger than ourselves and those at our point of development. Even so, we are left with the possibility of 100,000,000 planets in the galaxy having life forms very much advanced from us. (This number would be reduced significantly if life forms destroyed themselves soon after reaching our age of development. This is a philosophical point on which I am optimistic—I believe the majority of races will learn to survive.) If these stars are uniformly distributed in the galactic disk, the average separation will be

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about 10 light years.

The usual scientist's reaction at this point is, well, even if the assumptions are correct and this number of advanced civilizations does exist, contact is still impossible because of the speed of light limitation of the theory of relativity...My reply is that such a statement would appear to be shortsighted. For the moment, let us ignore the possibilities of overcoming the long time of travel by suspended animation and the like. Recall that our own physical theory has been developed in only 500 years. What can we expect in the next 500? Or 1000 or million or even billion years? I suggest that if a way to circumvent the speed of light restriction is possible, it has already been found by someone in our galaxy... If it has been discovered by one, we certainly would expect it to be used; if no other planet's inhabitants independently discovered the means, it makes little difference for such a thing could be taught by the discoverer. Thus we may conclude that it is very likely that at least one, and probably many of the 100 million advanced planetary populations is capable of interstellar travel.

The next question is, of course, have any of them been here? That question cannot yet be answered definitively. Without knowing what kind of phenomenology extraterrestrial visitors might exhibit, I will fall back on my scientific, mechanistic attitudes and say it makes sense to look for some kind of vehicle or spaceship. It appears that the class of phenomenology called UFO reports may contain, as a subset, actual observations of such craft...[4]

This is quite a statement! One can understand why RAND Corporation and, by extension, the Air Force, wished to keep this study confidential At the time the document was issued, in 1968, the Air Force's public posture was that its two-decade investigation of UFOs strongly suggested they did not even exist, at least as some unknown entity, and could easily be explained as natural phenomena or misidentified man-made aircraft. However, as thousands of declassified USAF documents now confirm, in many UFO sighting cases, the actual facts were in sharp contrast to this officially-dismissive public relations position on the phenomenon.

The RAND UFO document was written 40 years ago, and a few of the

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quantitative estimates have since been revised upward by scientists (e.g. the number of stars in our galaxy, once believed to be to be 100 billion is now estimated at 200 billion, with some estimates extending to 400 billion). Nevertheless, the RAND study remains an invaluable analysis of the potential number of alien races engaged in interstellar travel and. by extension, the number potentially operating in the vicinity of Earth. Given that the contemporary estimate of the number of stars in our galaxy has increased by a factor of at least 2—if we assume that all of the other factors mentioned in the report remain proportional—then one might reasonably postulate a similar upward revision in the number of advanced extraterrestrial civilizations engaged in interstellar travel within the Milk' Way.

Obviously, merely estimating the potential number of space-faring races in our galaxy, provides no real information about how many are actually operating in our vicinity, either temporarily or on a continuing- possibly permanent basis. Therefore, although it is anecdotal, perhaps the best data at the moment come from the more reliable of the eyewitness reports of alien beings sighted on the ground near their landed craft, or through its windows.

As previously noted, all debunkers and most skeptics will say that there are no such reliable reports because the events described are non-existent. However, I—and many other UFO researchers—believe otherwise and suggest that these alien sighting cases, although relatively rare, provide one very rough gauge of the number of advanced races present, given the reported physical diversity of the beings, from case to case.

Why Do Aliens Reportedly Look Similar To Humans?

Skeptics also ask, “Why are aliens always described as humanoid in appearance by those who claim to have seen them? Isn’t this highly unlikely, given that evolution on different planets would have proceeded differently?”

To state the obvious, the use of the term “humanoid” is our own projection onto another life form that looks something like us. Setting aside, for the

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moment, the descriptions of alien beings provided by the UFO abductees, and using only the eyewitness reports of beings walking or standing near landed UFOs, or observed through a UFO's windows, there are at least three (and probably many more) potential reasons why aliens reportedly look somewhat human.

First, consider the possibility that the "humanoid" form is a universally-distributed, highly-successful, evolutionary model for sentient beings. Importantly, such life forms would, as we do, have two forward- facing eyes, which permit stereoscopic vision, so that depth-perception is possible. They/we also have an erect, bipedal stance which permits them/ us to gradually develop hands that can grip tools and, eventually, build things—including spaceships.

In fact, one might argue that other types of intelligences, perhaps many superior to ourselves, who did not develop hands as part of their evolutionary progression, would not be capable of building craft to travel in space and, therefore, could not arrive here and present themselves to humans. In other words, while other non-humanoid forms of intelligent life probably exist in the Universe, they might be restricted to their own worlds. At the moment, this cannot be proved, one way or the other, but such a theory would explain why those advanced races who make it to Earth in spaceships are apparently only comprised of beings who have stereoscopic eyes, stand on two feet, and have hands with that can grasp things, including tools.

Of course, different physical environments on Earth appear to modify a creatures specific attributes, for example, the size of its eyes, in response to the ambient light level, or the degree of coverage and density of hair or fur, depending on the local temperature-range, and so on. Consequently it is not unreasonable to suggest that the hypothesized universal pattern for an erect, bipedal, intelligent being—if such a generic pattern does indeed exist—would evolve somewhat or even very differently on different planets, resulting in a wide range of variations in the being's height, weight skin color, facial features, the length and number of fingers and toes, as well as many other features.

Consequently, one would expect to find variation, rather than uniformity, in the appearance of aliens—given that they have different origins—which is

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precisely what has been reported by UFO sighting witnesses around the world. In my view, the *degree* of diversity described is so pronounced, from case to case, so as to rule out the possibility that all of those beings hail from the same planet, just as Caucasian, Negroid, and Mongolian races all come from Earth. While racial differences probably exist on other worlds, the collective physical diversity of the beings reported in association with landed UFOs is simply too great for all of them to originate from the same place.

Perhaps most notably, given what our own paleontologists have learned about human evolution, with brain and cranium sizes generally increasing over time, one might reasonably speculate that the many witness reports of aliens having a very large head, relative to their much shorter, slender body, would be a predictable evolutionary development for an extremely advanced humanoid. (However, it must be said, other aliens emerging from UFOs reportedly have head-to-body ratios similar to humans.)

A second possible explanation for why humans look somewhat like the reported aliens is because we are them. If aliens have been coming here for a very long time, it is not out of the question that human evolution has been deliberately modified by outside influences—really outside influences. This possibility has been traditionally rejected by biologists, if for no other reason than the long-held belief that inter-species interbreeding, between humans and aliens, would be highly implausible, if not impossible.

However, this argument becomes increasingly less viable with even passing year, in our brave new world of cloning, implanting genes from one species into another, and the other already practiced or proposed marvels of human genetic engineering. If we have been able to accomplish these feats, after only a few decades of research, imagine what an advanced, space-faring race might have achieved, thousands or even millions of years ago, while visiting the Earth when it was populated by proto-humans.

Needless to say, the proposal that an alien race created, or even dramatically altered our own understandably rankles traditionally- religious persons, of all faiths, who sincerely and unquestionably believe that the Bible, or the Koran, or whatever, states that God alone created humankind in His own image. Nevertheless, while alien intervention in our own evolution may have never occurred, can it really be ruled out as a possibility by those

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who do not adhere to traditional beliefs? At this point, we have entered the arena of religious argument, a place in which I will tread no further.

A third possible reason that aliens reportedly look somewhat like humans involves the now-respectable concept of time-travel. One might be surprised by the number of theoretical physicists who currently propose its reality, in one form or another, either with or without the classic time- travel paradoxes noted by scientists and science fiction writers alike. (For example, if you went back in time and killed your grandfather before your father was conceived, you would have never existed in the first place, and so would be unable to undertake such a time-trip.) In any event, if time travel is indeed possible, then perhaps some of the sightings of "humanoids" with huge heads and big bug eyes are actually sightings of humans from the very distant future, who have evolved into something similar to, but not quite like, today's homo sapiens.

In addition to these sightings, there are also the occasional reports of UFO occupants who are virtually human in appearance, down to the smallest detail. If these particular beings are humans from the future—and not some other, technologically more advanced species with an evolutionary path nearly identical to ours—then the clear implication is that our species will utilize time travel in the relatively near future, perhaps a few thousand years from now, before evolution significantly modifies our physical appearance.

I will assert that given the great diversity of the UFO occupants' physical forms, as reported by sighting witnesses, the future-humans hypothesis alone can not account for *all* of the reports. Therefore, in addition to the possibility that some of the beings observed near landed UFOs are indeed humans from our future, many others are very probably true "aliens" from various advanced civilizations scattered throughout the galaxy or, perhaps, the whole universe/multiverse/parallel dimension matrix. (Man! The cosmos was certainly easier to describe when I was a kid!)

Why Has There Been No Open Contact?

"Take us to your leader!" This stereotypical image of visiting aliens although cartoonish, is essentially what many people believe would take

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place, the minute the visitors step out of their spaceships. UFO skeptics and debunkers alike have asked, “If UFOs are alien spacecraft, why doesn't one just land on the White House lawn and settle the issue once and for all?” In fact, many of these critics argue that because such a thing has never occurred, aliens cannot possibly be operating here.

While this is a valid argument for some, it is undoubtedly a simplistic view of the situation. A counter-argument, suggested by some researchers, including the author, is that if some UFOs are indeed extraterrestrial craft, then perhaps the beings within them are engaged in a gradual, but deliberate unfolding of themselves, designed to slowly but surely sensitize humankind to their reality. If this ultimately proves to be the case, our curiosity will ultimately be satisfied—but patience will be required.

This view is of course rejected by UFO skeptics, and many of them continue to ask, “If they are here, why no contact with us?” Essentially, these persons are asking whether it is logical that advanced alien beings would travel vast distances only to engage in the usually aloof and teasing behavior exhibited by the UFO phenomenon? However, this question posed as such, incorporates some not necessarily valid assumptions. For example, if the aliens have mastered the means to render exploration of the cosmos manageable—by FTL travel—then the “vast” distances are not nearly as formidable as presumed by skeptics, and the aliens’ behavior upon arriving at another world would be modified accordingly, either in easily understandable or, possibly, counter-intuitive ways. As will be discussed shortly, despite some skeptics’ simplistic views on the matter, there are several other, and far more logical scenarios relating to alien contact with humankind.

Perhaps not surprisingly, many scientists who are skeptical of the UFO reality have publicly argued—and some of them have even told me this personally—that a visiting aliens’ initial request would be something like “We want to meet with your best minds, to learn about their findings, and to share our knowledge with them.” These particular critics contend that because the aliens, after what is presumed to be their decades or even eons-long journey to Earth, have not yet landed and asked to meet with human scientists—ostensibly our species’ best minds—this fact alone rules out the possibility that the visitors are here.

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In other words, this particular skeptical point-of-view is predicated, first, on the now-dubious premise that interstellar travel is inherently a very, very time-consuming proposition, which would, so the argument goes, logically result in alien visitors wishing to immediately contact humans—probably scholars or, at least, government leaders—upon their arrival on Earth. However, as noted earlier, the presumption that universal laws mandate sub-light-speed travel only is almost certainly flawed, as a growing number of our own theoretical physicists now concede.

Moreover, the view held by some scientists that visiting aliens would, as soon as they had stretched their legs, obviously want to trade notes with *them*, has I think as much to do with these individuals' inflated self-image as it does with plausible scenarios related to an alien species' first contact with humankind. Actually, it is far more likely that even the most dim-witted of the visitors would be so advanced, relative to human scientists, that they would regard our "best minds" as we regard our own infants, or pets, and treat them accordingly. Needless to say, such condescension, were it to occur, would be for many human scientists a very rude awakening indeed. Indeed, as we shall shortly see, one of our own scientific studies about ET contact reached the very same conclusion.

So, assuming that one or more alien races are operating here, if they don't want to land in Washington D.C., or Moscow, or Beijing, or some other world capitol, and present themselves to our governments' representatives—or even meet with our brightest scientists—just what are their intentions for eventual contact with humans, assuming that such a meeting is actually on their agenda?

Here, we re-enter the realm of best-guesses. No one, at least those of us not working for one of the various intelligence agencies, either in the U.S. or Russia or elsewhere, can possibly know with certainty the answer to this question. (And perhaps those folks are in the dark too.) Nevertheless, we can speculate, using the available data and inductive reasoning. Some possible scenarios follow:

1) Perhaps the visitors are engaged in a long-term observation- based study with no intentions of open contact until much later, once humankind is a

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more-advanced or, at least, a less-violent race. The wildly popular sci-fi series, *Star Trek*, hypothetically predicts that this type of non-interference protocol—which it dubs "The Prime Directive"—would be practiced by any advanced, peaceful race of beings which is exploring, or at least monitoring, less-advanced worlds. Optimistically, *Star Trek* envisions the day when humans will also achieve such a technologically-advanced-but-passive status, but at some relatively distant point in our future.

2) Perhaps the visitors are engaged in what is essentially surveillance but also involving limited but secretive intervention, perhaps for ethical reasons. A modified Prime Directive, so to speak, including but not necessarily restricted to the occasional disruption of our nuclear weapons, to send a signal of their concern or displeasure. If this is the case—and I believe it is—such outside interference, especially on an ongoing basis, would obviously represent a very unsettling development for any nuclear-capable nation. Therefore, the government of that nation would endeavor to hide such disruptions in its strategic weapons systems from its citizens and, most especially, its international enemies. Of course, there might be other types of limited alien interaction with humans, perhaps including the "abduction" of a relatively modest number of us for scientific study—or even to use in experiments involving genetic engineering—another occurrence, assuming that it is taking place, any government would want to hide from its citizens, to prevent panic.

3) In conjunction with either 1) or 2), perhaps the visitors are engaging in something akin to a public education program, for all humans, whereby certain kinds of display behavior, including the rather rare but obviously deliberate over flights of large metropolitan areas—resulting in mass sightings—are designed to gradually acquaint our species with the reality, and presence here, of one or more other advanced races. These brazen and dramatic incidents invariably receive widespread, even global, publicity, significantly enlarging the size of the "audience". This non-confrontational behavior, over a prolonged period, would have the positive effect of raising the collective human consciousness, in safe, small increments. Such a strategy by our visitors could conceivably pave the way for eventual,

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unambiguous contact with humans, by minimizing the kind of potential disruptions for us that a more sudden type of contact might create.

If in fact this is the visitors' game plan, then even their more limited, solitary displays—such as use of bright and/or flashing lights observed on a UFO during nocturnal sightings—would have a cumulative effect. Such attention-getting behavior, when observed by humans all over the globe over a several-decade period would further facilitate a gradual unveiling of the aliens' reality. Allowing their craft to be tracked on radar would contribute to our steadily growing awareness that really foreign, possibly alien, aerial objects are operating in our atmosphere. Surely something as advanced as an interstellar spacecraft would have a radar-evading, or stealth, capability. So, assuming that they have it, why don't they use it? The fact that UFOs are repeatedly tracked by military and civilian radars, at least some of the time, might be further evidence that the visitors intend to leave an empirically-verifiable calling card, to hint at their presence in an indirect manner.

4) Perhaps the visitors are basically scientifically-inclined observers of many different planetary societies, including ours, but have no real interest in formally interacting with—that is, contacting—any of them. If this is true, then the essentially aloof behavior of those piloting the UFOs is reasonable and explainable. Even our own anthropologists do not become engaged in the affairs of the various societies they are studying. To do so would alter, and thereby taint, the data being collected. If this is standard operating procedure for our own scholars, why would more advanced aliens behave less scientifically than ourselves? While I believe that the visitors' behavior is more suggestive of eventual contact with humans, this alien- anthropologists theory cannot be ruled out at this time.

Of course—and it must emphasized—if more than one alien race is operating here, all of the above scenarios may be occurring simultaneously.

Why The Official Secrecy About UFOs?

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One retired public relations specialist who worked for the U.S. government during the Cold War era has neatly summarized the basic strategy involved in keeping government secrets: “You come up with the best cover story that you can. You stonewall. You deny. Eventually, the story becomes just a rumor that is difficult, if not impossible, to confirm.”

Although skeptics reject the notion outright, if the U.S. government does indeed know that UFOs are spacecraft piloted by alien beings, why has it—as well as any other government in on the big secret—postpone the inevitable by not revealing the facts to the citizens of the world? Why do these official hierarchies continue to deny something that, according to public opinion polls, huge numbers of humans already believe to be true?

While there are at present no real answers to these questions, at least in the public domain, many theories have been proposed by researchers, and even a government analyst or two, to explain what is widely-perceived to be the ongoing cover-up relating to UFOs.

First, from the governments’ point-of-view, openly announcing the presence of ETs would be an extremely risky gamble, with highly unpredictable consequences. For example, it is well known that thousands of panicked Americans ran into the streets on hearing “War of the Worlds’’—an unorthodox radio play, broadcast on Halloween eve, 1938—in which actor Orson Welles and a troupe of talented players vividly simulated a devastating Martian invasion, complete with the destruction of New York and other American cities.

We laugh now about the naivete of 1930s-era radio audiences, nevertheless, the incident illustrates the potential consequences of abruptly announcing the presence of aliens on Earth. Even today, at the beginning of the 21st century, millions of humans all over the planet, in sophisticated and primitive cultures alike, might react in a decidedly negative manner, it suddenly confronted with the reality of extraterrestrial visitors.

In the radio play, the Martians were cast as conquerors bent on the destruction of the human race. So far, we in the public have no evidence that those who pilot UFOs have similar aims, and I argue that world leaders have no evidence of hostile intent either. If this is so, should the U.S. government, or any other government, decide to reveal the reality of the alien presence, at

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least no dire warning of imminent destruction from the sky will accompany that already earth-shaking, paradigm-altering announcement.

Nevertheless, the mere admission that the "UFO phenomenon ' alien visitation will certainly be a momentous confession in itself, having far-reaching and unpredictable consequences. Thus, some have theorized to prevent the potential for public panic, or other undesirable upheavals in human society, the longstanding policy undertaken by most of the governments worldwide, amounts to a concerted effort to keep secret, as long as possible, the reality of extraterrestrial visitation.

If this is indeed the policy—and there are, in my view, significant data to suggest that it is—then the national security components of the U.S. government have undoubtedly been influenced, at least in part, by the findings of various analysts who have studied the question of alien visitation. According to one frequently-cited, government-sponsored study, the sudden realization that intelligent, technologically-superior alien races actually exist would have a myriad of dramatic and potentially disastrous consequences. In November 1960, the Brookings Institution released a report titled *Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs*. The study had been commissioned by the U.S. space agency, NASA.[5]

Within the report is a section titled, "The Implications of a Discovery of Extraterrestrial Life", which speculates on the potential consequences for humanity resulting from such a development. It was perceptively suggested that those consequences would be dependent on the type of life discovered: "If plant life or some subhuman intelligence were found on Mars or Venus, for example, there is on the face of it no good reason to suppose these discoveries, after the original novelty had been exploited to the fullest and worn off, would result in substantial changes in perspectives or philosophy in large parts of the American public, at least any more than, let us say, than did the discovery of the coelacanth or the panda... [However] if super-intelligence is discovered, the results become quite unpredictable..."[6]

While Brookings' analysts believed that the discovery of intelligent life elsewhere in the galaxy would probably occur via the interception of radio signals from an extraterrestrial civilization, consideration was also given to the idea that members of such a civilization might actually arrive here in

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spaceships one day: “It is possible that if the intelligence of these creatures were sufficiently superior to ours, they would choose to have little if any contact with us. On the face of it, there is no reason to believe that we might learn a great deal from them, especially if their physiology and psychology were substantially different from ours.”

Well, maybe. Humanity’s response to actual alien visitation—whatever that response might be—would entirely eclipse any reaction to a public announcement confirming the reception of radio signals from an alien race trillions of miles from Earth. Radio communication from afar is one thing; unknown visitors unexpectedly appearing on the doorstep is quite another.

Regarding the potentially negative consequences of alien visitation, the Brookings report warned, “Anthropological files contain many examples of societies, sure of their place in the universe, which have disintegrated when they had to associate with previously unfamiliar societies espousing different ideas and different life ways; others that survived such an experience usually did so by paying the price of changes in values and attitudes and behavior.”[7]

Expanding on this theme, the report noted that for the “Fundamentalist and anti-science sects”, the discovery of intelligent life elsewhere would be “electrifying.” While not explicitly stated in the report, one can reasonably suppose that any religious sect which maintains that humankind is the apex of God’s handiwork would be devastated to learn otherwise. Indeed, it is possible that such sects might initially view alien visitors as demons or angels —or perhaps both, if more than one race presented itself—rather than flesh-and-blood creatures similar to ourselves.

Moreover, states the Brookings report, other categories of humans might also be negatively impacted: “It has been speculated that, of all groups, scientists and engineers might be the most devastated by the discovery of relatively superior creatures, since these professions are most closely associated with the mastery of nature...[It’s possible that possessing an] advanced understanding of nature might [invalidate] all our theories at the very least, if not also require a culture and perhaps a brain inaccessible to earth scientists.”[8]

As for the rest of us humans, the report states, “… one can speculate, too, that the idea of intellectually superior creatures may be anxiety-provoking.

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Nor is it clear what would be the reactions to creatures of approximately equal and communicable intelligence to ours."[9]

Important for our discussion, the Brookings report also touched upon the momentous decisions which would confront world leaders, if and when extraterrestrial life is discovered (or discovers us): It stated. "How might such information, [and] under what circumstances, be presented to, or withheld from, the public [and] for what ends? What might be the role of the discovering scientists and other decision-makers regarding release of the fact of discovery?"[10]

It seems plausible that NASA, which commissioned the study, as well as any agency of the U.S. government concerned with national security would have carefully considered all of these crucial questions, perhaps especially the idea of withholding worrisome information from the public.

Although the analysts at Brookings were unaware of it at the time, declassified Air Force, FBI and CIA documents now make clear that the U.S. government had been covertly collecting data on the UFO phenomenon long before the release of their own report. Indeed, as early as August 1948, one secret Air Force study, Project Sign, had concluded that UFOs were extraterrestrial spaceships. Although that finding was immediately rejected by the USAF Chief of Staff, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg—ostensibly because full and final proof was lacking—it nevertheless remains a fact that the intelligence officers who actually investigated numerous UFO sightings had reached a dramatic conclusion about their nature. As noted elsewhere in this book, upon resigning from the Air Force, the first chief of Project Blue Book, Captain Edward Ruppelt, wrote a best-selling book about government UFO investigations prior to 1953. Although he mentioned the findings of Project Sign, there is no evidence in the Brookings report to suggest that those who wrote it were aware of that published revelation.

Because the Brookings analysts were unaware of the now-declassified, UFO-related documents, they were also oblivious to the fact that many of those Air Force, FBI and CIA reports summarized UFO sightings at nuclear weapons sites, including the laboratories and/or fissile material production sites at Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, Sandia, Savannah River and Hanford. One wonders what impact such startling information might have had on the

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analysts at the Brookings Institution, given that there was, and continues to be, no evidence that the Soviets were responsible for the apparent surveillance of the nuke sites by mysterious, disc-shaped aerial craft.

Regardless, it seems a virtual certainty that the U.S. military and intelligence community would have been quite concerned by the Brookings study, given the final report's warning about the "unpredictable" consequences resulting from the realization that other intelligent life actually existed—as well as its mention of the fact that numerous examples already existing in humankind's history, in which various societies had then disintegrated when confronted with previously unknown cultures. (European contact with the indigenous races of the Americas would be an excellent example of this premise, although it must be noted that the Spanish, English, Portuguese, Dutch and French came to conquer and convert, motivations which might not necessarily be applicable when discussing visitation by a superior alien race, or even multiple races from different planets.)

Astronomer David Darling, publisher of *The Internet Encyclopedia of Science*—who believes that science has a duty to seriously consider UFOs—has succinctly summarized the Brookings report's findings relating to the discovery of extraterrestrial life:

"… If there are other space-faring, star-to-star communicating races in the Galaxy, then we must be technologically primitive in comparison with the great majority of them. A major concern then is what might follow from first contact with creatures who, whatever their nature, possess knowledge and power far in excess of our own. Examples from human history seem to offer a cautionary note: exploration has gone hand in hand with exploitation, colonization with conflict and subjugation. In almost every case, the more technologically advanced interloper, intentionally or otherwise, has eventually imposed its ways and assimilated or emasculated the weaker party. Even if this were not to happen, it is uncertain how the human race would react to the discovery that it was, in cosmic terms, so backward. An optimist might argue that we would relish the prospect of rapid growth and would quickly learn from our older, wiser mentors, as children do from adults. A pessimist might insist we would be crushed to learn that, despite all our efforts, others had vastly surpassed us..."[11]

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Darling concludes by noting that some scientists, including Nobel laureates Martin Ryle and George Wald, agree with the cautionary findings contained in the Brookings report, and believe that contact with a superior species will ultimately be devastating to mankind. However, says Darling, "Others, such as Carl Sagan, William Newman, and Arthur C. Clarke have defended the view that mature civilizations in the Galaxy would recognize the risks of first contact to younger races and would avoid revealing too much about themselves or their knowledge until the time was right."[12]

In my view, the latter scenario is far more plausible and might explain the curious and coy behavior of the "UFO phenomenon." The countless reports of fleeting and often stealthy nocturnal encounters, involving one or two witnesses driving on a deserted road, are occasionally punctuated by ostentatious daylight displays before thousands—occasionally hundreds of thousands—in large metropolitan areas all over the globe.

One example is the repeated mass sightings that occurred in various Mexican cities during the decade of the 1990s. Although relatively rare compared to the more clandestine sighting cases, these mass-sightings definitely appear to involve a type of display behavior—perhaps a demonstration designed to acquaint large numbers of people, as benignly as possible, with the new paradigm. But, as tantalizing as these events are, the visitors remain, frustratingly, just out of reach.

Regardless of the reason(s) for the phenomenons inconsistent behavior, both types of UFO activity—the secretive, sometimes one-on-one encounters, as well as the other, far more flamboyant exhibitions apparently intended for large audiences—are now thoroughly documented, worldwide, on video tape and sometimes by radar.

What does this behavior suggest about the intentions of the visitors? It would seem that a decades-long process of step-by-step self-revelation is far more indicative of eventual open contact with our species, rather than any sinister motives. If one were intent on conquering a planet by the high-tech equivalent of brute force, would one engage in the teasing, exhibitionist behavior that UFOs have displayed for over half a century? Probably not. You would most likely conceal yourselves while you assessed the target, and then strike suddenly.

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Another credible source, former CIA official Victor Marchetti, suggests a more self-serving scenario to explain what he openly asserts is the ongoing secrecy related to UFOs. In his view, the ruling classes in various key countries intend to keep the presence of alien visitors a secret to protect their own power and status. In other words, according to Marchetti, rather than protecting humanity as a whole, our leaders are much more concerned with protecting themselves.

After resigning from the agency, Marchetti wrote (with U.S. State Department analyst John Marks) the best-selling book, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, whose publication the CIA fought all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Eventually, a partially-redacted version was published in 1975, making it the first book in American history to be successfully censored by the U.S. government. In 1979, in an article published in Second Look magazine, titled, "How the CIA views the UFO phenomenon", Marchetti wrote,

My theory is that we have, indeed, been contacted—perhaps even visited—by extraterrestrial beings, and that the U.S. Government, in collusion with other national powers of the Earth, is determined to keep this information from the general public. The purpose of the international conspiracy is to maintain a workable stability among the nations of the world and for them, in turn, to retain institutional control over their respective populations. Thus, for these governments to admit there are beings from outer space attempting to contact us, beings with mentalities and technological capabilities obviously far superior to ours, could, once fully perceived by the average person, erode the foundations of the Earths traditional power structure. Political and legal systems, religions, economic and social institutions could all soon become meaningless in the mind of the public. The national oligarchical establishments, even civilization as we know it, could collapse into anarchy. Such extreme conclusions are not necessarily valid, but they probably accurately reflect the fears of the 'ruling class' of the major nations, whose leaders (particularly those in the intelligence business) have always advocated excessive governmental secrecy as being necessary to preserve 'national security.' The real reason for such secrecy is, of course, to keep the public uninformed, misinformed, and, therefore, malleable…

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[Let's assume] there are UFOs or there have been contacts—if only signals —from outer space, but the evidence reveals the aliens are interested only in observing us [and] they have no hostile intentions and are no direct threat to any nation. [If this is the case,] public knowledge of these facts could become a threat. If the existence of UFOs were to be officially confirmed, a chain reaction could be initiated that would result in the collapse of the Earth's present power structure. Thus, a secret international understanding—a conspiracy—has been agreed to by the world powers to keep the public ignorant of and confused about contacts or visitations from beyond Earth.[13]

Marchetti's commentary is important, not because it reveals the Cl As bottom-line assessment of UFOs—it does not—but, rather, because it presents the valuable insights of a professional intelligence officer whose arguments elucidate one possible explanation for the U.S. government' secrecy on the subject of UFOs. If Marchetti is correct, although those piloting the UFOs may harbor no hostility toward humans, their mere existence and presence may, from the government's perspective, have to remain a secret as long as possible.

As Marchetti noted, whether or not this is actually a valid argument remains to be seen but, as he would probably argue, because no government has officially announced the "facts", this in itself is evidence that none of them wishes to take the chance.

Regardless, if at some point the UFOnauts themselves choose to reveal the reality of their presence, in absolutely unmistakable terms, no government on Earth will be able to prevent it. Although the confirmation of alien visitation may not doom mankind, as some predict, it certainly will change everything —dramatically and forever.

I will suggest here that it would be beneficial if visiting aliens were of a mind to challenge at least some human institutions, such as warfare—in particular, nuclear warfare. Granted, considering humans' long history of nearly-incessant conflict with one another, extending back thousands of years, the belief that aliens might be able to fundamentally modify negative human behavior may seem utopian. Perhaps it is, but given that human

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survival would be at stake, should a full-scale, global nuclear war ever erupt, is it not natural to at least theorize (and hope) that a stern admonishment against the use of nukes, by one or more visiting alien races, might be the very catalyst necessary for nuclear-capable governments to finally and sincerely undertake the implementation of policies devoted to complete nuclear disarmament?

What Happens Next?

Given the unprecedented and earth-shaking nature of verifiable alien visitation—certainly the pinnacle of all paradigm shifts (short of God landing on the White House lawn)—the manner in which this momentous new reality would unfold is simply unpredictable. While the current scientific thinking dismisses the notion that UFOs are extraterrestrial craft, it's entirely possible that irrefutable developments will occur to render this dictum obsolete.

The transformation may be gradual. UFOs may eventually come to be seen as a legitimate subject for scientific study, and data will ultimately be amassed to prove the ET hypothesis of UFOs as fact. In other words, the resulting paradigm shift would be measured and ongoing and, therefore, more easily accepted and absorbed by scientists and laypersons alike.

But proof of alien visitation might abruptly present itself at a single stroke, crashing upon us with unexpected, stupefying suddenness. If extraterrestrial visitors are really here and suddenly decide to forego their sometimes timid, sometimes brazen, peek-a-boo behavior and reveal themselves openly—in an irrefutable worldwide demonstration—then the resulting paradigm-shift will be instantaneous and profoundly shocking to humanity as a whole, even to those who predicted its inevitability. Such a development could occur at any time—even tomorrow.

Assuming that eventual open contact occurs, predicting and interpreting alien behavior may prove to be an impossible task because no real frame of reference exists for such an endeavor. While one might hope that their modus operandi would involve actions and motivations which could be accurately deciphered by humans, there is certainly no guarantee that this would be the

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case. Consequently, our natural tendency to interpret the visitors' behavior in terms of our own frame-of-reference may have to be discarded, or greatly modified before meaningful communication between the races can be achieved.

Considering an alternate scenario, it may well be that all intelligent species in the universe possess certain shared attributes which, although differing in specifics, can nevertheless be deciphered and understood when contact between them occurs. If this is the case, our visitors' intentions, motivations, and belief systems may eventually become comprehensible to humans. Whether they would voluntarily share with us specific knowledge about their technology, society, or understanding of the cosmos is another question. Given mankind's tendency toward violence, it is likely that visiting aliens, whether one race or many, would be cautious about the type and extent of information they would impart to us, at least for the time being.

So, that's my two cents regarding the Big Questions. Now, however. I will leave the realm of the theoretical and return to the world of events—actual, startling, provocative events—which were undoubtedly meant to be instructive to the military men determined to test the nuclear weapons systems that might conceivably be used in future warfare.

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9. Shot from the Sky

The Big Sur UFO Incident has been studied and debated for more than two decades. Some researchers, including the author, consider it to be an unparalleled example of UFO interest in—and interference with—our nuclear missile systems. However, other ufologists dismiss the case, either because they believe it to be explainable in prosaic terms, or they view it as a complete fabrication, an absurd hoax perpetrated by two U.S. Air Force officers, former Lt. Bob Jacobs and retired Major Florenze Mansmann.

My own opinion is that the critics have judged prematurely and in an essentially uninformed manner. As I have discovered, many of them are badly misinformed about the case, having unreservedly accepted a factually-inaccurate summary of it published by a leading skeptical magazine. Other detractors have reviewed Jacobs' own presentation of the case—apparently inattentively—and have subsequently misstated his remarks in a most irresponsible manner.

In an effort to set the record straight, I hereby present unpublished or not-widely-circulated information about the Big Sur UFO Incident which is nevertheless highly relevant to this debate. I will also examine a number of fundamental errors in the above-mentioned debunking of the case.

First, a brief review of the alleged UFO encounter: Early one morning in September 1964, an Atlas D Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) was launched from Vandenberg AFB, California, carrying aloft an experimental enemy radar-defeating system and dummy nuclear warhead. Shortly after nosecone-separation, as the warhead raced toward a targeted splash-down at Eniwetok Lagoon, in the Pacific Ocean, it was approached by a disc-shaped UFO. As the saucer chased and then circled the warhead, four bright flashes of light emanated from the unknown craft whereupon the warhead began to tumble, eventually falling into the ocean hundreds of miles short of its intended target downrange.

Science fiction? Not according to the former USAF officer tasked with filming the Atlas launch through a high-powered telescope. Then Lt. (now Dr.) Bob Jacobs—who was assigned to the 1369th Photographic Squadron at

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Vandenberg, and held the title Officer-in-Charge of Photo. instrumentation—states that the entire encounter was captured on moti0n picture film. According to Jacobs, while the UFO's maneuvers were readily discernable, other minute details—including the object's domed disc-shape—were only discovered during an in-depth optical analysis conducted at Vandenberg.

At the time of the incident, the telescope/camera system was located at Big Sur, California, over 100 miles northwest of the launch site. The state- of-the-art instrument employed an ultra light-sensitive Image Orthicon—essentially a television camera tube—whose images were filmed for study with a 35-mm movie camera.

Following the dramatic incident, says Jacobs, a 16-mm version of the amazing film was shown to a small, select group at Vandenberg. At the conclusion of this meeting, which he attended, he was told to "forget' the filmed events and to never mention them again. Years later, Jacobs learned that after he left the room, the crucial frames were cut out and quickly confiscated by two "government agents"—possibly working for the CIA—-who had been among those in attendance.

Importantly, Jacobs' account—relating to both the UFO incident itself and the subsequent cover-up—has been entirely endorsed by another officer, retired Major (later Dr.) Florenze J. Mansmann, Jr. At the time Mansmann had been assigned to Vandenberg AFB's Office of the Chief Scientist, 1st Strategic Aerospace Division. It was he who had ordered Lt. Jacobs to attend the restricted screening of the film in his office at the division's headquarters building.

Dr. Jacobs' thorough and technically-detailed summary of the incident, "Deliberate Deception: The Big Sur UFO Filming", was published in the January 1989 issue of the *MUFON UFO Journal*. It is currently available online.[1] Because Jacobs' account is still accessible, rather than extensively re-stating his remarks here, I have instead opted to present additional, pertinent information about the case.

The Private Letters of Jacobs and Mansmann

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I first interviewed Jacobs, by telephone, in 1986. Afterward, was provided copies of personal correspondence between himself and Mansmann which referenced the Big Sur event. Additionally, researcher Lee Graham provided me with copies of letters Mansmann had written to him, as well as to another individual, Peter Bons, on the same subject.

In those letters, Jacobs and Mansmann were obviously still stunned by, and marveling over, the Big Sur UFO incident—some 20 years later. It is important to note that this correspondence was never intended for publication, to support the validity of the case. Rather, it represents the private musings of two former USAF officers—involved and knowledgeable insiders—who had experienced what was obviously a life-changing event for each of them.

In one letter to Graham, dated January 30, 1983, Mansmann lamented the fact that Jacobs had gone public with the case. He wrote, "… I do have some deep concerns about information, so vital to the future of mankind, falling into the wrong hands..." He then alluded to the Soviets' theft of A- bomb secrets during World War II. Nevertheless, said Mansmann, because "the cat [was] out of the bag", he had decided to confirm Jacobs' account of the incident to various individuals who had written to him.[2]

Mansmann echoed this sentiment in a letter to Peter Boils, dated March 8, 1983: "Dr. Bob opened a pandoras box [sic] and in the last few months I have been bombarded with phone calls and letters. I try to answer the sincere ones."[3]

Mansmann then discussed the image of the UFO captured on film: "Details would be sketchy and from memory. The shape was [a] classic disc, the center seemed to be a raised bubble...the entire lower saucer shape...was glowing and seemed to be rotating slowly. At the point of beam release—if it was a beam, it, the object, turned like an object required to be in a position to fire from a platform...but again this could be my own assumption from being in aerial combat." Mansmann's evaluation of the UFO's origin was explicit: "… the assumption was, at that time, extraterrestrial."[4]

At some point, Lee Graham forwarded copies of these letters to Bob Jacobs. The former lieutenant subsequently wrote to Mansmann on January 14, 1985, saying, "[Your letters to Graham and Bons] reveal a great deal

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more about that fateful piece of film than even I knew. It appears that you did a good deal of analysis on it at the time."

Jacobs continued, "The technology to which you and I were witness, the technology recorded on that few feet of film, indicates orders of magnitude [beyond] our relatively primitive efforts in mechanics, propulsion, and possibly quantum physics as well. Such intelligence might be suspected to regard us as little more than savages..."

Jacobs then speculated that the UFO's aggressive action was intended as a reprimand. Referring to the four flashes of light which seemingly disabled the dummy warhead, he wrote, "...those beams of light on 0Ur film [were] a WARNING. A shot fired across the bow, so to speak, of0llr nuclear silliness ship."[5]

To document these statements, I have forwarded copies of Jacobs' and Mansmann's correspondence to CUFOS, where it will now be made available to other researchers. Although Florenze Mansmann is deceased Bob Jacobs and Lee Graham have given me permission to place the letters in the public record.

The importance of these 1980s-era personal letters is obvious. Taken together, they capture the candid, unguarded impressions of the two most important sources for the Big Sur UFO story. Notably, those impressions coincided to a remarkable degree, even though Jacobs and Mansmann had no contact with one another once they left Vandenberg AFB some 20 years earlier. Lee Graham's fortuitous intercession reunited them, and they obviously had much to discuss.

My Appearance with Jacobs on Sightings

In 1995, a producer with the television series Sightings contacted me regarding my UFO research, and extended an invitation to appear in one of the show's segments. Frankly, I was cautious, given the program's often not-well-grounded presentation of paranormal phenomena. I was uneasy about Sightings' general superficiality and tendency toward the melodramatic. But of course, the series was produced in Hollywood, where audience-share

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ratings are far more important than the presentation of serious research. *Sightings* was designed to be popular entertainment, nothing more, capitalizing on the public's fascination with the paranormal.

After weighing the pros and cons, I eventually consented to appear on the show. The segment producer, Curt Collier, then asked me to contact a few of my ex-military sources, in the hope that one of them would participate in a joint-appearance. My first thought was of Bob Jacobs. Although I had not spoken with him for years, I located Dr. Jacobs and asked if he would be interested in telling his story to a nationwide television audience. He readily agreed. Basically, Bob and I had each concluded that any public airing of the facts involved in the Big Sur UFO Incident would be a positive development. While I would have much preferred a call from a producer at *60 Minutes*, offering to put Bob Jacobs' story on the air, I suspect that such a proposal would have never materialized.

Because our schedules did not coincide, Jacobs and I were interviewed separately by the Sightings staff. Shortly after I arrived at Paramount Studios, producer Collier handed me a letter he had just received from Dr. Mansmann. I read it and was delighted. The retired USAF major had unequivocally endorsed—yet again—all of Jacobs' public statements about the Big Sur UFO case.

Dated November 15, 1995, the letter began, "Dear Mr. Collier, Responding to your Fed Ex letter of November 14, 1995 regarding the validity of the January 1989 *MUFON [UFO] Journal* story by Dr. Robert Jacobs, it is all true as presented. And yes, I have also responded to other researchers in the past, but only after Dr. Jacobs released the details of these sightings [sic] negating my secrecy bond."

Mansmann continued, "The Image Orthicon camera system we used in capturing the Unidentified Flying Object on film had the capacity to photograph the 'nuts and bolts' of the missile launch and its super sonic flight...In retrospect, I now regret not being able to evaluate the film for more than 3 showings. The only people in attendance of the viewing were: The Director of the Office of the Chief Scientist and his assistant, two Government Agents, Lieutenant Jacobs and myself. The two Government Agents confiscated the film and placed it in a briefcase and departed after I

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had checked their authorization to leave with the film. I was instructed later by the Office of the Chief Scientist, the Judge Advocate General's office and my Commanding Officer to consider the incident top secret." Mansmann concluded his letter to Collier, "I am writing to confirm Dr. Jacobs' account..."[6]

In other words, more than 30 years after the top secret incident and more than six years after Jacobs' article appeared in the *MUFON UFO Journal*, Dr. Mansmann was once again unreservedly verifying Bob Jacobs' report of a UFO shooting down a dummy nuclear warhead over the Pacific Ocean, in September 1964.

Florenz J. Mansmann, Jr. died on July 4, 2000, but he remained adamant to the end that the extraordinary encounter—involving an extraterrestrial spacecraft—had occurred and was classified Top Secret.

Was the CIA Involved?

Mansmann's description of the confiscation of the critical film footage—which he says was unreeled after the group viewing in his office and snipped out with scissors—has been challenged by some detractors of the Big Sur UFO case. Admittedly, there do seem to be inconsistencies relating to the "agents" in the former major's account, as summarized in his personal letters over the years.

For example, in a May 6, 1987 letter to researcher T. Scott Crain, Jr Mansmann had unambiguously written that the agents were employed by the CIA. Specifically, he referred to the group screening in his office as "the CIA attended meeting", and later noted that he didn't "know the names of the CIA personnel."[7] However, some eight years later, Mansmann told Curt Collier that the film had been confiscated by "Government Agents" The subsequent use of this vague term seems curious, given the former major's earlier specificity.

(For the record: In the same 1987 letter to Crain, Mansmann had also written that three, not two, agents were present in his office that day. In my view, this particular discrepancy is inconsequential and may be attributed to

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an inadvertent error, or a fading memory of a decades-old event. In every other written statement about the agents—at least those with which I am familiar—Mansmann reported that two men were present. Furthermore, to his credit, Mansmann—when recalling the filmed UFO encounter in his letter to Peter Bons—had candidly admitted that the "details would be sketchy and from memory." I think this is a very reasonable and telling comment. In all of his correspondence on the case, Mansmann never once attempted to portray his recollections as flawless or complete.)

Jacobs also noted Mansmann's apparent hedging regarding the affiliation of the men in civilian suits. During one of our 1995 telephone conversations, Bob sounded somewhat puzzled, saying, "At one time, [Mansmann] was openly referring to those guys as CIA. Nowadays, lie calls them 'government agents'. I don't know what's going on there. Maybe he's decided not to openly talk about the CIA being involved."

Despite this remark, I suspect that Jacobs understood the reasons for Mansmann's guarded public posture regarding the "government men A decade earlier, in his January 14, 1985 letter to Mansmann, he had written, "When Lee Graham tells me in a letter that you confirm the [warhead shoot-down] story but are 'reluctant to make any inquiry...for fear of reprisal from the agency that appropriated the film', I shudder in my boots...Over two decades after the filming of a 'warning shot', must we still fear 'reprisal' for seeking answers to what may be the innermost secrets of the cosmos itself?"

Some critics of Mansmann's testimony, and the Big Sur case in general' doubt that the CIA would have had any jurisdiction over—or even much interest in—the alleged warhead shoot-down incident. These persons contend that the agency had only a peripheral, sporadic interest in UFOs over the years. They note that, at least officially, UFO investigations and policy decisions were almost always under U.S. Air Force jurisdiction. Therefore, these critics reason, the CIA would not have been directly involved in the Big Sur case in any manner.

In response to those who doubt that CIA agents would have been present in Mansmann's office—or who similarly contend that the CIA has never played a central role in the U.S. government's cover-up of UFOs—I will briefly mention a strikingly similar situation, occurring some two decades after Big

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Sur, in which another CIA-orchestrated suppression of UFO data has been alleged by an authoritative source.

John Callahan, a now-retired high-level administrator with the Federal Aviation Administration, is on-the-record regarding the CIA's direct and dominant role in an important UFO incident, in November 1986.

While in Alaskan airspace, a Japanese Airlines pilot had sighted and tracked on radar a huge, walnut-shaped UFO, as it maneuvered near his aircraft. Ground-based FAA and USAF radars also tracked the object, for up to 31 minutes. When word of the remarkable encounter reached the press, it generated headlines worldwide.

The next day, according to Callahan, a small group of FBI and CIA employees, and others, unexpectedly arrived at FAA headquarters to be briefed on the sighting. During the meeting, "one of the guys from the CIA" ordered everyone present sworn to secrecy. The same individual also ordered the FAA to turn over its radar, air traffic voice communications, and written records relating to the incident—in the interests of national security. Despite this official order, Callahan more or less intentionally withheld some of the data on the case, which he later unapologetically released to researchers.

Callahan said that at one point during the meeting—after he had asked whether the secrecy relating to the sighting was actually warranted—the same CIA employee "got all excited" and told him that there would be no official acknowledgment of the UFO, given the potential for public panic.[8]

Although the officially non-existent meeting at FAA headquarters occurred in November 1986, Callahan's statements bear more than a little similarity to the account provided by Mansmann, regarding the secret "CIA-attended" meeting at Vandenberg AFB, in September 1964. Both men unequivocally report that the agency had confidently confiscated important UFO evidence, suggesting an official jurisdiction superseding the Air Force's own role, at least in these two incidents.

Given the specifics of Callahan's story, and considering his professional credibility—he had been the FAA's Division Chief of the Accidents and Investigations Branch—I accept the report he provides as credible. By extension, I must also respectfully disagree with those critics who contend that CIA-involvement in the Big Sur UFO Incident can be automatically and

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indisputably ruled-out. Considering the obvious national security implications relating to nuclear weapons testing, the agency's participation in the cover-up of the UFO incident seems plausible, in my view.

Kingston George Enters the Picture

If Bob Jacobs' account regarding the Big Sur UFO Incident is "all true", as Florenze Mansmann asserts, then it is arguably the most dramatic case on record of apparent UFO interference with one of our nuclear weapon systems. As such, its importance can not be overstated. While the actual motivation behind the apparent shooting down of the dummy warhead remains unknown—Jacobs has speculated that it was designed to convey displeasure over our possession of nuclear weapons—the act itself was nevertheless unmistakably provocative and, from a technological perspective, absolutely astounding.

But did the UFO encounter actually occur as Jacobs and Mansmann have portrayed? In its Winter 1993 issue, *Skeptical Inquirer* (SI) magazine—published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)—featured an article entitled, "The Big Sur 'UFO': An Identified Flying Object", written by Kingston A. George/In September 1964, George had been the project engineer for the experimental telescopic tracking and filming of Atlas missile launches at the Big Sur site. In that role he had worked directly with Jacobs. Therefore, one would think, George would be an authoritative source on the subject of the alleged events described by Jacobs and Mansmann. Actually, he claims to be exactly that.

Given CSICOP's well-established position of debunking all UFO sightings, it is not too difficult to guess the tone of George's article. He begins by dismissing Jacobs' "weird claims" and then offers an alternate, prosaic explanation for the events captured on the film in question. In fact, George claims to know precisely what took place because, he says, he viewed the film himself.

George maintains that the payload atop the Atlas missile was an experimental enemy radar-defeating system designed to release six simulated

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warheads—decoys—in addition to the unarmed dummy warhead. George implies, but never actually alleges, that when Jacobs viewed the film of the test, he inexplicably mistook the deployed decoys, enveloped in small clouds of packing material, for the maneuvering "UFO".

George then notes that had this rest (and similar ones) been successful, the use of simulated warheads might effectively confuse Soviet missile defenses, in the event of nuclear conflict between the superpowers. In principle, the Russians' radar-guided anti-missile missiles would fail to identify the genuine warhead among the decoys, thereby greatly increasing [he odds that it would escape destruction and reach its intended target in the Soviet Union.

Elsewhere in his *SI* article, George contends that the four flashes of light described by Jacobs—who had called them "beams of energy"—were actually momentary luminous bursts or "blooms" on the Image Orthicon's extremely light-sensitive screen. According to George, there were only three blooms—the first was created by a bright exhaust plume, as the Re-entry Vehicle separated from the Atlas' sustainer tank. The second and third blooms, he says, were created by the small explosive charges used to effect the decoys' release from the tank.

Consequently, George claims, Jacobs simply misinterpreted the objects and events he saw on the film screened in Mansmann's office. He asserts that everything related to the ICBM launch is reasonably explained without invoking Jacobs "weird" scenario involving aliens from outer space.

After dismissing Jacobs' basic contention—UFO interference with the experimental warhead test—George then alleges other "fundamental flaws" in the former lieutenant's article in the *MUFON UFO Journal*. For example, George says that Jacobs incorrectly referred to the Atlas missile's trajectory as "orbital", meaning that it was programmed to circle the Earth. In reality, writes George, the flight was sub-orbital. This point is apparently designed to raise questions about Jacobs' basic understanding of the launch.

Actually, it is George who has it wrong: he has misquoted Jacobs! Nowhere in the *MUFON UFO Journal* article does Jacobs refer to the missile's flight as being orbital. On the contrary. Regarding the events immediately following the four flashes of light observed emanating from the UFO, Jacobs writes, "Subsequently, the warhead malfunctioned and tumbled out of

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suborbit [my emphasis] hundreds of miles short of its target." Elsewhere in the article, he refers to the missile's "suborbital capsule". However, Jacobs does state that the UFO "flew a relative polar orbit around our warhead", which is undoubtedly the source of George's misquote.

In addition to this error, George also misrepresents another of Jacobs' key statements. After accurately noting that Jacobs had referred to the UFO directing "a beam of energy" at the dummy warhead, George goes on to claim that Jacobs had referred to the luminous ray as "a laser beam". George then says, quite correctly, that a laser beam would not be visible in space, which is essentially where the warhead was at the time of the incident.

The problem is this: Jacobs never actually referred to the UFO's four beams of light as laser beams. He did say, however, that after he viewed the film in Mansmann's office, the major had ordered him to call the beams "flashes from [USAF] laser tracking", should anyone ever ask Jacobs about the incident.

So George has regrettably misquoted Jacobs yet again. Considering this inaccurate, inattentive, highly-misleading critique in *Skeptical Inquirer*, I feel compelled to emphasize the point: Bob Jacobs, in his *MUTUAL UFO Journal* article, referred to each of the four luminous pulses as "a beam of energy, possibly a plasma beam". Most plasmas—which are ionized gases—glow readily, depending on their density, and are indeed visible in the high atmosphere. The Aurora Borealis, which can occasionally extend to 350 miles in altitude, is one example. Many plasmas in space, including some nebulae, are also visible and glow profusely.

If—I say if—the beams of light described by Jacobs (and Mansmann) were discharges from a plasma-based, directed-energy weapon, they would very likely be visible on film, just as the two former officers have reported. Regardless, George's inaccurate version of Jacobs' admittedly speculative statements concerning the beams is unacceptable and warrants comment.

(In the interest of fairness, I will note here that Jacobs has acknowledged certain factual errors in his own 1989 article. For example, he estimated that the missile's nosecone had separated at 60 nautical miles altitude, whereas the actual altitude was apparently 200 nautical miles. Similarly, he had initially gauged the warhead's velocity at the time of the UFO encounter at

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18,000 mph. In a subsequent interview, however, he more accurately estimated it was traveling between 11,000 and 14,000 mph- Declassified data confirm that the nosecone-separation occurred at just under 11,000 mph. Jacobs and Mansmann agree that the shoot-down event took place shortly thereafter—perhaps a minute or more later.)

On the subject of the "beams of light" reportedly released by the UFO, I recently asked Jacobs to elaborate on his brief, published description of them. After a thoughtful pause, he responded, "I wouldn't want to say that they looked like lightning bolts, but the appearance was similar. They definitely didn't look like a laser beam would, say in a laboratory experiment. There was an extremely bright flash, coming from just below the cupola on the object. From the center of the flash there was a luminous beam, or bolt, extending all the way from the UFO to the warhead. That happened four times, as the object circled the warhead. That's the best way to describe what we saw."

In this instance, Jacobs was not only referring to the images he and Mansmann saw during the restricted screening of the film, but also to one tiny feature discovered during Mansmann's enhanced optical analysis of the footage: Jacobs had personally observed the beams' general appearance on film, however, when he describes each beam emanating from just below the UFO's "cupola" or dome, he is reporting on a detail later provided to him by Mansmann.

Despite some critics' claims to the contrary, there is nothing physically impossible about the warhead being bumped out of its programmed trajectory, as reported. The scientific principle governing the modification of an object's direction in space—by applying an outside force to it—is well-established. The UFO's beam-release, as described by Jacobs and Mansmann in their private letters and published statements, would appear to be this kind of event. Each of the former officers reports observing on film four beams of light being directed at the warhead, after which it tumbled out of suborbit.

Of course, nudging a nuclear warhead out of its intended trajectory—or even destroying it—with a plasma beam is beyond our current capabilities. Nevertheless, there apparently has been extensive but classified research relating to the latter, using a directed-energy weapon—albeit one based on

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the ground, not in space.

In 2001, the authoritative *Jane's Defence Weekly* featured a story saying that such a project had been initiated by the U.S. Air Force over a decade ago, and further noted that the research may have continued on a covert basis after the projects official termination.

Referring to the USAF's highly-secret Phillips Laboratory, *JDW's* aerospace consultant Nick Cook wrote, "In the early 1990s, the U.S. Air Force was preparing tests at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, designed to lead to a ground-based plasma-weapon in the late 1990s capable of firing plasma bullets at incoming ballistic missile warheads. The enabling technology was a 'fast capacitor bank' called Shiva Star that could store 10 million joules of energy and release it instantaneously. Officials anticipated firing bullets at 3,000km/sec in 1995 and 10,000km/sec—3% of the speed of light—by the turn of the century... Dumped into the 'soft' electronics of a re-entry vehicle, the bullets were envisaged as destroying multiple manoeuvring warheads at rapid re-acquisition rates. By the second half of the last decade, the Shiva/plasma bullet programme was officially dropped. Observers have remarked on how its sudden disappearance at the time the firing tests were scheduled was redolent of a transition to the classified environment."[9]

Therefore, while the composition of the beams of light described by Jacobs and Mansmann remains unknown, it's possible that efforts arc underway at present to develop our own plasma-based, directed-energy weapons. Even if the Air Force program described above was not shifted to the Black Project realm, but was discontinued as officially announced, it nevertheless seems that such weapons have been seriously investigated by the U.S. military—as a means to bring down incoming nuclear warheads.

If the Big Sur UFO Incident occurred as portrayed by those who actually viewed the filmed record—that is, Jacobs and Mansmann—then it would appear that someone else, vastly ahead of us technologically, has already achieved this type of shoot-down feat. Jacobs has speculated that those responsible for the act somehow let a few of our military leaders in on their little secret in advance, and anticipated the subsequent filming of the event. I disagree with this particular contention, and consider the scenario unlikely. To my knowledge, Mansmann never expressed his point-of-view, one way or

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the other, on this possibility.

A Question of Image Resolution

But would the remarkable, UFO-related events—assuming they occurred—actually be visible on the film, at least in the detail described by Jacobs and Mansmann? After all, at the time of the alleged incident, the distance between the separated warhead and the telescope at Big Sur would have been significant. Indeed, recent calculations performed by former Minuteman missile launch officer Bob Salas, at my request, suggest that the nosecone-separation occurred some 470 nautical miles *from the camera*.[10] Jacobs earlier estimated that the UFO had made its appearance more than a minute later, after the warhead itself separated from the nosecone—"as we neared the end of the camera run."

Published Atlas launch data indicate that the nosecone-separation event occurs at 5.3 minutes (T+320 seconds), at which point the nosecone package is 475 nautical miles *downrange*, and 200 nautical miles in altitude." Bob Salas used these data—as well as the geographical coordinates of the launch site, the telescope site, and the intended splash-down site—to trigonometrically derive the approximate distance between Big Sur and the nosecone-release. The mathematical result is obviously an estimate, given that the nosecone package—at the point of separation from the missile launcher—was traveling at nearly 11,000 mph (about 3 miles per second).

So, given these data, and quantitative estimates, would the alleged shoot down incident be visible on film? Kingston George claims that all the objects at that distance—the warhead, the radar experiment, the nosecone, even the alleged UFO—would have appeared only as mere specks of glinting sunlight, due to an effect known as "specular reflection."

Actually, Jacobs has partially substantiated this assertion. In a letter to researcher T. Scott Crain, Jr., dated July 25, 1986, Jacobs wrote that when he viewed the film in Mansmann's office, the UFO had appeared only as a rapidly-maneuvering "small point of light." However, he also wrote, "Mansmann, who inspected the film with a magnifier, says that the object

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was saucer-shaped with a dome on top."[12]

As noted earlier, Mansmann confirms this statement and has written, "The shape was [a] classic disc, the center seemed to be a raised bubble... the entire lower saucer shape… was glowing and seemed to be rotating slowly. At the point of beam release—if it was a beam, it, the object, turned like an object required to be in a position to fire from a platform..."

Therefore, according to Mansmann, a thorough analysis of the anomalous point of light—utilizing a simple form of image-enlargement—had confirmed that it was a bona fide UFO, and revealed some degree of detail relating to both its structure and movement. While Kingston George may claim that no such detail would be visible in any object at that distance, Mansmann has clearly and repeatedly stated otherwise. Although the incident almost certainly occurred hundreds of miles beyond the point at which the nosecone separated from the missile—the exact distance may never be known—Mansmann has been specific and steadfast in his description of the UFO's appearance on film.

Regarding the objects dimensions, Mansmann wrote, "Telescopic photography of that magnitude makes sizes indeterminable. We knew the missile size but could not compare [that with the UFO] since we did not know how far from the missile the 'object' was at time of beam release."[13]

It is worth noting that when Mansmann screened the film in 1964, he already possessed extensive observational and photo-interpretation experience. As he later told Curt Collier, "By the time of this missile launch, I was a trained officer in Aerial Observation and a Combat Radar Navigator in World War II, a Director of Operations for the Ground Observer Corps during the Korean and Cold War conflicts, a trained Aerial Reconnaissance Officer… and photo interpreter for clandestine operations for three years during the Berlin Airlifts..."[14] Considering these facts, one would think that Mansmann—who had reviewed the film in question at least three times—would be capable of distinguishing between a featureless, twinkling speck of light, and a "classic disc" UFO with a dome.

Significantly, Kingston George's assessment of the Big Sur telescope's usefulness is also a matter-of-record. Bob Jacobs' 1989 *MUFON UFO Journal* article quotes from an official 1964 USAF report written by George,

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in which he had described the then-experimental telescope/ camera system's capabilities. As the project engineer, George stated that one of the goals of the filming was to record "minute events following propellant depletion—at distances of from 300 to 800 nautical miles."[15]

However, in his 1993 *Skeptical Inquirer* article, George seems to downplay his earlier, official assessment of the system's resolution at that range. Given his published comments pertaining to specular reflection, he now appears to contend that while various "minute events" related to the launches were indeed visible at great distances, the missile component themselves would have appeared only as points of light, exhibiting no discernable detail.

Regardless, George's more recent, and apparently much more modest, portrayal of the telescope's capabilities is strikingly contradicted by photo-interpretation expert Florenze Mansmann's *contemporary* and detailed assessment of the anomalous object captured on film. Once again, in his letter to Peter Bons, the retired major wrote that, given the UFO's domed-disc shape and amazing performance, "… the assumption was, at that time, extraterrestrial."

I recently asked Jacobs to elaborate upon his earlier published comments relating to the number and type objects visible in the field-of- view just before and during the shoot down event. He responded, "We saw the nosecone separate and open up—it looked like an alligators open jaws. We saw the experiment, which was metallic chaff, come out. We saw the dummy warhead come out and inject into a different [trajectory]. All of the other components, the chaff and so on, were all still flying along. They don't lose altitude all that quickly because of momentum. So, there were several objects visible when the UFO came into view."[16]

This description suggests that at the time of nosecone-separation—some 470 nautical miles from the telescope—certain of the ICBMs structural components were clearly visible, including the nosecone's two halves, as they split apart. However, by the time the UFO approached and circled the dummy warhead, the unidentified object appeared—at least on a movie screen—only as a "small point of light." Presumably, the warhead itself was minuscule as well. Mansmann has alluded to the difficulties involved in size-determination at those distances, but if we assume the UFO was at least 30-

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feet in diameter, the 11-foot-long Re-entry Vehicle (RV), containing the dummy warhead, would have appeared relatively smaller—unless the UFO was maneuvering well beyond the RV, from the camera's point-of-view. I think, however, the circling motion described by both Jacobs and Mansmann suggests that the object was fairly close to the warhead.

Regardless—and I stress—the actual distance from the telescope to the alleged shoot-down event is unknown, at least by those in ufology who have researched the question. Therefore, in my opinion, it is presumptuous for anyone to suggest that there currently exists—at least in the public domain—an unassailable, absolutely quantifiable solution to the image- size issue. Having said that, Bob Salas' mathematical work does provide a reasonable estimate regarding the distance between the telescope and the missile, at the time of nosecone-separation. Once again, according to Jacobs and Mansmann, this routine event occurred shortly before the appearance of the UFO.

The Actual Date of the Incident

Arguably the single most crucial "fact" mentioned by George, in his *Skeptical Inquirer* article, is the date of the missile launch. He unequivocally says it took place on September 22, 1964. This assertion is central to his case because he claims to have personally screened the film of that particular launch and, therefore, claims to know exactly what it showed. Consequently, says George, he can confidently rule-out Jacobs' (and Mansmann's) controversial interpretation of the objects and events captured on film.

But what if George is wrong about the date of the launch described by Jacobs and Mansmann? Suppose he has inadvertently—I won't say intentionally—selected another Atlas launch during that time-frame as the basis for his uncompromising, debunking commentary? Remarkably, published evidence now seems to confirm that this is indeed the case.

In his 1989 article in the *MUFON UFO Journal*, Jacobs had written that, although he could not pinpoint the exact date of the launch, information in his personal log indicated that the likely date was September 2nd, 3rd, or 15th,

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1964. Once George wrote his skeptical article—declaring that the launch had actually occurred on September 22nd—Jacobs quickly responded by saying that his log suggested that he was not even present at the Big Sur telescope site on that date.[17]

Furthermore, Jacobs had also candidly acknowledged that he could not remember the exact model of Atlas ICBM used to launch the enemy radar-defeating experiment and dummy warhead. While he thought that it had been an Atlas F, he admitted that it may have been an Atlas D.

In an effort to establish the actual launch date, and type of missile involved, I wrote to Mark Wade, at *Encyclopedia Astronautica (EA)*, and asked that he provide me with records relating to all Atlas launches at Vandenberg AFB during September 1964. Wade replied that while there was no record of an Atlas F being launched that month, there were two launches attributed to Atlas-Ds:

1964 Sep 15 – 15:27 GMT – ABRES LORV-3 re-entry vehicle test flight Vandenberg Launch Pad: 576A1 – Launch Vehicle: Atlas D 245H

1964 Sep 22 -13:08 GMT – NTMP KX-19 Target mission Vandenberg Launch Pad: 576A3 – Launch Vehicle: Atlas D 247D

(The abridged summaries provided by Wade are derived from lengthier references published by EA—and are based on Commander's Launch Reports and other USAF records.)[18]

Upon receiving this information, the first thing that caught my eye was the launch on September 15, 1964. When I informed Jacobs about the published data, he responded, "Well, Robert, I think you've found the launch. The timing is exactly right [according to my personal records]. 'The date, September 15th, is one of the three I mentioned. I never believed the launch took place on September 22nd, which is what George keeps saying. The stated mission of that launch had nothing to do with the experiment we were doing the day of the incident. We were testing a re-entry vehicle, just as [the published summary] says."

(The records published by EA state that the September 15th launch occurred at 15:27 Greenwich Mean Time, or 8:27 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time. In other words, it occurred in daylight, just as Jacobs remembered. In his 1989 article, he had mentioned his first glimpse of the ascending Atlas'

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fiery exhaust, as the missile “leaped through the snow-white coastal fog blanket” shrouding Vandenberg AFB, some 100 nautical miles southeast of the telescope site at Big Sur.)

The *EA* entries cited above indicate that the September 15th launch was designated a “ABRES LORV-3 re-entry vehicle test flight.” These cumbersome acronyms translate to “Advanced Ballistic Re-entry System” and “Low Observable Re-entry Vehicle”. In plain English, this is precisely the type of test described by Bob Jacobs all along. The Air Force had hoped that the warhead, within the RV, would be difficult to distinguish from the cloud of metallic chaff—aluminum foil strips—accompanying it through space. If this test was successful, the experimental system might defeat an enemy’s radar, by effectively rendering invisible the incoming nuclear warhead.

According to *Encyclopedia Astronautica*, the September 22nd launch—the one picked by George—was designated a “NTMP KX-19 Target” mission, which means Nike Target Missile Program, flight number KX- 19. As I was to later learn, unlike the earlier test on September 15th, which was designed to evaluate the experimental Re-entry Vehicle itself, the purpose of the target test was to determine whether the U.S. Army group on Kwajalein Atoll would be able to track the RV on radar. It was hoped—if such tests were successful—that incoming Soviet warheads might be targeted with Nike anti-missile missiles.

This distinction seemed clear enough, however, because Jacobs had written that the test disrupted by the UFO had been “in support of our Nike-Zeus objectives”, I needed to be certain that the September 22nd Nike Target” mission referenced in EA was not the actual launch after all. At first glance, one might interpret the wording of Jacobs’ “Nike- Zeus” statement as a reference to the launch discussed by Kingston George. Therefore, I challenged Jacobs on this point, asking him if he Were absolutely certain that the later launch—the Nike target test—was not the launch in question.

Jacobs’ response was emphatic, “No, we were testing the RV itself. It was not a target test.” He then elaborated, “There were several interesting aspects of the anti-missile-missile tests. This particular one involved a dummy warhead and a bunch of radar-deflecting aluminum chaff. The dummy

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warhead was targeted to splashdown at Eniwetok Lagoon… As far as I know Kwajalein [played no part in this test] aside from radar tracking. There was no planned Nike launch [involved with it]."[19]

Given this unequivocal statement, the question remains: Did George select and discuss the *same* missile test described by both Jacobs and Mansmann? The entries in Jacobs' original mission log, as well as the now- available data published by *Encyclopedia Astronautica*, appear to indicate that he did not.

Odd Omission

Significantly, in his *Skeptical Inquirer* article, Kingston George devotes not a single word to Florenze Mansmann's unreserved endorsement of Jacobs' published account of the Big Sur UFO Incident. Perhaps George was unaware that, by the time he wrote his debunking article in SI, Mansmann had already admitted to several people that Jacobs' account was factual.

I wished to ask George about this odd oversight, and other issues, so I telephoned him in January 2003. At the outset, I candidly admitted that I fully accepted Jacobs' and Mansmann's virtually-identical accounts regarding the UFO incident. I also said that I was seeking a few details and clarifications relating to his side of the story. Finally, I asked George if he had ever read, or at least heard about, Mansmann's published comments on the case.

George claimed to have no knowledge of Mansmann's endorsement of the reality of the UFO encounter, "other than what Jacobs wrote in his article." I then briefly summarized various supportive statements Mansmann had made over the years and asked George to explain the retired major's unwavering support for Jacobs, if in fact his account was merely a fabrication or flight of fancy. He responded, "I think [Mansmann] did that out of largesse."[20]

In other words, according to George, Dr. Florenze Mansmann—a distinguished retired U.S. Air Force officer and doctoral-level biomedical engineering researcher—casually risked, out of the goodness of his heart, his military and scientific reputation by knowingly and repeatedly endorsing Jacobs' "weird claims".

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Is the "largesse" scenario offered by George plausible? I think not.

Although a number of George's published statements about the Big Sur case are at best misleading, they still conceivably represent an attempt t0 present an honest difference of opinion with Bob Jacobs. Regardless, the fundamental point to be made is that George has apparently chosen the wrong launch mission upon which to base his extensive, debunking commentary. If this is indeed the case—and it seems very probable, based on Jacobs' private records as well as the technical data now published by *Encyclopedia Astronautica*—then many of George's errors understandably follow from his original misstep, thus negating much of the force of his critique in *Skeptical Inquirer*.

I consider it noteworthy that George's article was published in CSICOP's in-house magazine, *SI*. At first glance, this is hardly surprising, given CSICOP's tireless crusade to discredit UFOs. However, because the Big Sur incident reportedly involved a UFO disabling—shooting down—one of the U.S. military's experimental nuclear warhead systems, *Skeptical Inquirer's* strong endorsement of George's attempted debunking of the incident is particularly interesting.

Why? The longtime editor *Skeptical Inquirer* is Kendrick C. Frazier, whose day job, for over twenty years, involved doing public relations work for Sandia National Laboratories, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Sandia is one of the U.S. government's oldest and most important nuclear weapons labs, having engineered most of America's strategic weapons, both bombs and missile warheads.

Consequently, here is the situation: In what is arguably the most dramatic nuclear weapons-related UFO incident ever revealed, two former U.S. Air Force officers insist that one of our experimental nuclear warheads was actually shot down by a flying saucer. And who is responsible for publishing the first debunking article about the Big Sur incident, in which it is claimed that the UFO encounter never happened? Why, a PR guy working for the U.S. government's nuclear weapons program! Even today, some 15 years after Kendrick Frazier published Kingston George's factually-flawed article in *Skeptical Inquirer*, relatively few people are aware of this very interesting fact.

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Ironically, over the years, a great many UFO skeptics have used the supposedly accurate "facts" presented in George's article to dismiss the UFO link with nuclear weapons in general, and the Big Sur UFO Incident in particular. Needless to say, very few of those same skeptics will ever buy a book called, *UFOs and Nukes*, so they will mistakenly continue to believe that Kingston George's article is the last word on the Big Sur case.

Furthermore, the CSICOP-Nukes Connection does not end with Kendrick Frazier. James Oberg, one of CSICOP's leading UFO debunkers, once did classified work relating to nuclear weapons at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory, located at Kirtland AFB, just down the road from Sandia Labs.

From 1970-72, Oberg was an Air Force officer whose assignments with the Battle Environments Branch at the weapons lab involved the development and utilization of computer codes related to the modeling of laser and nuclear weapons. Oberg also served as a "Security Officer" while at the weapons lab and was, therefore, responsible for monitoring the security procedures used to safeguard the classified documents generated by his group.

After Bob Jacobs went public with the UFO shoot-down story, Oberg wrote to him, chastising Jacobs for revealing "top secret" information. In his *MUFON UFO Journal* article, Jacobs wrote that after he broke his silence, "I was contacted by a variety of investigators, buffs, cranks, proponents and detractors alike. James Oberg, a frequent 'mouthpiece' for certain NASA projects and self-styled UFO Debunker wrote to disparage my story and to ask provocatively, 'Since you obviously feel free to discuss top secret UFO data, what would you be willing to say about other top secret aspects of the Atlas warhead which you alluded to briefly...?' I told Mr. Oberg where to put his misplaced cynicism."[21]

Despite Oberg's charge, Jacobs has correctly pointed out that because Major Mansmann had told him that the UFO encounter "never happened", he had no personal knowledge of the classification level attached to the incident.

In any event, it is almost certain that Oberg would not have criticized Jacobs for exposing "top secret UFO data", had he known that Jacobs would subsequently publish his remark. So, here we have one of CSICOP's leading UFO debunkers—whose public stance is that UFOs don't even exist—angrily asking Jacobs in a private letter whether he would also openly discuss "other"

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top secret aspects of the missile test.

Even though Oberg also disparaged Jacobs' story in his letter—perhaps hoping that Jacobs would recant it under pressure—his remark, "Since you obviously feel free to discuss top secret UFO data..." seems to imply that Oberg considered the UFO aspect of the Big Sur incident to be very real, as well as top secret. In short, Oberg's statement appears to be a very odd and startling departure from his public persona as a debunker on UFOs.

I have no doubt that Oberg will claim that I have misinterpreted his remark, just as he will probably attempt to debunk the many credible statements by my ex-military sources regarding other nuclear weapons- related UFO incidents. Nevertheless, I view Oberg's letter to Jacobs as a rare, unguarded moment when he fleetingly revealed something other than his self-professed skepticism about UFOs. To me, it seems that Oberg, the former Security Officer at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory, was simply unable to stifle his strong indignation over Jacobs' disclosure of what Oberg considered to be top secret information about the UFO incident. When I sent my opinion about Oberg's criticism to Bob Jacobs, for his review, he agreed with my assessment of the debunker's motives.

For his part, CSICOP's chief UFO-debunker, the late Philip J. Klass, aggressively hounded Dr. Jacobs after he published the warhead shoot- down story, going so far as to write a derisive letter to Jacobs' department chairman —Dr. R. Steven Craig, Department of Journalism and Broadcasting, University of Maine—in which Klass accusingly questioned professor Jacobs' fitness as a representative of the academic community.

Jacobs' understandably indignant response to Klass, entitled, *Low Klass: A Rejoinder*, may be found online.[22] It is a must-read for anyone wishing to understand the behind-the-scenes battle that ensued after Jacobs went public with the UFO incident.

Among other subjects, the rejoinder touches on acrimonious correspondence between Jacobs and Klass. At one point, after Dr. Jacobs ignored Klass' repeated demands that he respond to the debunker's charges, Klass offered character references, citing Admiral Bobby R. Inman (USN Ret.)—the former Director of the National Security Agency, who also held Deputy Director positions at both the Central Intelligence Agency and the

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Defense Intelligence Agency—and Lt. General Daniel O. Graham (USA Ret.), the former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and former Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Klass not only provided Jacobs with their names, but home addresses as well, and told him, "Both men have worked with me and gotten to know me in my efforts for *Aviation Week*."

The character references provided by Klass are certainly interesting, given his stock response over the years to those who questioned his motives. Whenever he was confronted with the charge that he was not really a UFO skeptic, but a disinformation agent for the U.S. government, Klass would always recoil indignantly and ridicule the notion. So who does he choose to present as character references in his letter to Jacobs? Two of the top intelligence officers in the U.S. government.

Jacobs took Klass' mention of Inman and Graham as a veiled threat and wrote,

Put yourself in my position now. I had published an article charging that the CIA, or some other secret agency of the government, had been instrumental in covering up the documenting of a UFO, that I had been ordered to be part of a cover-up in connection with that incident, and had now written about it. Then, along comes some chipmunk demanding that I turn over material to him and referring me to Bobby Inman and Daniel Graham to soothe my anxiety! The last outfit in the world to which I would turn for verification of a source or the legitimacy of a UFO 'researcher' [Klass] would be the CIA!

Jacobs then reports on his response to Klass' demands,

I contacted my attorney immediately, and he advised me to have nothing to do with Klass or any of his people, since they might be trying to set me up for some sort of violation. In a letter dated April 3, 1989 I told Mr. Klass politely to go away and leave me alone, as follows:

On advice of counsel and with all due respect, I am declining your offer. 1

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have nothing which belongs to you, I have nothing to which you are entitled by rights and I don't like feeling pressured.

My article in the MUFON [UFO] JOURNAL says all that I have to say about the incident at Big Sur. The pertinent part of the Kingston George report was quoted only to prove that there was a malfunction during the period of time during which the B.U. telescope was at Big Sur and that the B.U. telescope was certified to have recorded it. This proof was necessary to refute the earlier assertion by the Air Force that there was not even a launch, much less a malfunction recorded by the B.U. telescope. I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised by this denial since the Air Force also denied earlier that there had ever been a Lieutenant Robert Jacobs![23]

Final Thoughts About the Big Sur Incident

The crucial source testimony relating to the Big Sur UFO Incident has been explicit, detailed, and steadfast. While Dr. Bob Jacobs readily concedes that certain of his recollections involve reconstructions and estimates, the basic narrative he presents has remained intact, nearly 25 years after it was first published, in the face of often withering criticism and indefensible insult.

Importantly, there exists a second, highly-credible source for Jacobs' account.

Dr. Florenze Mansmann has repeatedly and unequivocally endorsed it as being "all true as presented." Moreover, because Mansmann's photo-interpretation tasks at Vandenberg AFB involved his expert evaluation of the films of Vandenberg's missile tests, he was the perfect person to analyze the objects and events recorded during the launch in question. His own assessment of the UFO incident is direct and unapologetic: A domed-disc—an extraterrestrial spacecraft—maneuvered near one of our dummy nuclear warheads and shot it down with four beams of directed-energy.

In 1964, when the incident occurred, such a claim—even by a distinguished

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USAF officer—would have seemed deluded or, at best, a bizarre science fictional fantasy. Think Buck Rogers and death rays. However, by 2001, a respected military-affairs journal could report that the U.S. government had once undertaken—and might still be covertly pursuing—research relating to shooting down incoming nuclear warheads with directed-energy beams.

If the account provided by Jacobs and Mansmann is indeed factual, as I believe, it is understandable why the U.S. military would wish to keep the Big Sur UFO Incident secret. At a minimum, we arc discussing the existence of vastly superior, saucer-shaped craft, capable of pacing and disabling our nuclear warheads in space. A confirmation of the event would effectively be an official acknowledgment of our potential strategic vulnerability. For this reason, if no other, the Pentagon will never admit the reality of the incident. Furthermore, regardless of its actual purpose, many American citizens would view the shoot-down act as hostile, thereby greatly complicating any official announcement of its occurrence.

More to the point, official verification of the warhead shoot-down would represent an irreversible admission of extraterrestrial visitation—simply because the technology reportedly involved was vastly beyond human achievement in 1964, and undoubtedly remains so at present.

The fact that some of Jacobs' and Mansmann's harshest critics were °r are themselves engaged in classified research or public relations tasks in support of the U.S. government's nuclear weapons program is arguably noteworthy in any meaningful examination of this case. Perhaps these persons have sincerely expressed their skeptical opinions, however, there is also another possible explanation: Debate is one thing but disinformation is quite another. In my view, the boundary between the two has been blurred during the discussion of this particular UFO incident.

The UFO-Nukes Connection has been confirmed by both declassified U.S. government documents and credible military witness testimony- including that provided by former ICBM launch and targeting officers. As noted, over the years, a number of those officers have reported instances of missile malfunctions occurring just as UFOs were observed maneuvering near or hovering above launch-related facilities. I consider this testimony to be important and compelling—and relevant to our review of the events at

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Vandenberg AFB, in September 1964.

Whatever UFOs are, whatever their origin, whatever the purpose of their presence may be, it appears that those who presumably pilot these craft are interested in our nuclear weapons systems—for whatever reason—and have occasionally interfered with their functionality. Regarding the Big Sur UFO Incident in particular, the question is whether these unknown visitors have shot a dummy nuclear warhead out of the sky. In my view, the daring testimony of Bob Jacobs and Florenze Mansmann convincingly suggests this is indeed the case.

After Word

The information in this chapter was first published in February 2007, in an article I wrote for the Center for UFO Studies publication, *International UFO Reporter (IUR)*. Shortly thereafter, CUFOS' Scientific Director, Dr. Mark Rodeghier, sent a copy of the article to Kingston George, together with an invitation to respond to my remarks on the Big Sur case.

On March 23, 2007, George emailed Rodeghier, "Thank you for the complimentary copy of *IUR* per the request of Robert Hastings. I am not interested in responding at this time to the Hastings imaginative article. Please tell him for me that his trying to bring this dead horse back to life is not worthy of further discourse."

This response is obviously evasive and disingenuous. George knows full well that I decimated his own article on the Big Sur incident. He has nothing to gain by responding to my fully-documented article, given that he would have to address my embarrassing expose of his many misquotes and factual errors—not to mention my frequent, documented references to Dr. Mansmann's revealing statements in support of Jacobs' published account. Indeed, Mansmann's revelations greatly strengthen the Big Sur case by providing a wealth of information regarding the image of the UFO captured on film—details unknown to Jacobs until many years later.

Regarding the telescope's basic ability to capture the image of the UFO at such a great distance—something Kingston George claims is impossible—

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Dr. Rodeghier conducted the following optical analysis, which mathematically refutes that objection.

Image Resolution of the Optical System at Big Sur

by Mark Rodeghier

Robert Hastings correctly asks this key question: But would the remarkable, UFO-related events, assuming they occurred, actually be visible on the film, at least in the detail described by Jacobs and Mansmann?' This is one of the central points of contention raised by skeptics, including Kingston George himself...Fortunately, the question can be answered because George supplies the mirror size of the telescope used at Big Sur, and because well-known optical principles govern image resolution. George reports, 'The 24-inch mirror telescope we borrowed was built in the 1950s...by Boston University under government contract.'

The size of a telescope's mirror determines its resolution, which can be defined as the ability to separate two point-like sources of light. Consider a double star system. If a telescope (or your eye) can see only one point of light, then the two stars are unresolved. If both stars can be seen separately, then the stars are resolved.

Resolution is a complex issue when sources other than distant lights are being viewed, but becomes simpler when a situation basically mirrors that in astronomy, where an object's real size is much, much less than its distance from the telescope.

The resolution of a telescope is well approximated by the Rayleigh formula, which is based on diffraction. The governing equation is:

$$\text{Resolution (in radians)} = 1.22\lambda / D$$

where λ is the wavelength and D is the size of the mirror. Using a wavelength

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of 550 nanometers, typical of sunlight, and substituting 0.61 meters for D, yields a theoretical resolution of 0.23 arc seconds. Next we must determine the effective size, in arc seconds, of the missile or UFO at the distance they were filmed. Based on Robert Salas's calculations, we can use an approximate distance of 600 nautical miles. (It turns out that altering this by a factor of 20% or so won't make an appreciable difference in the result.) I won't trouble with listing the formula for angular diameter/angular size, but simply present the result for an object 10 meters in size (the estimated diameter of the UFO).

At 600 nautical miles, an object 10 meters in size subtends about 1.86 arc seconds. This is much larger than the resolution limit of 0.23 arc seconds of the 24-inch telescope being used to capture images of the launch. What this means in plain English is that, under good conditions, the system used at Big Sur should have easily been able to see an object 10 meters in size as a separate object. The general shape of the object should also have been discernable.

This result also suggests that objects just a few meters apart could have been resolved as separate by the optical system. That this was the capability of the system seems consistent with George's own commentary. As be notes, 'we not only could see and gather data on the missile anomalies as hoped, but we also were viewing details of the warhead separation and decoy deployment that were considered by the air force to be highly classified.'

There are two caveats to this analysis. First, the Rayleigh resolution is theoretical and is not reached except under the most exceptional viewing conditions. Effective resolution at mountain sites like Big Sur typically varies from 0.50 to 1.0 arc second. Even then, an object 10 meters in diameter could be resolved by the telescope.

The second is the nature of the film system recording the output from the telescope. The system filmed the image off an Image Orthicon screen, and if

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the screen had lower resolution than the input from the telescope, some detail would be lost.

All the same, the system would still be able to see (resolve) an object circling the missile in flight, unless it was very close (less than a few dozen meters). Bright pulses of light from the object to the warhead should also have been visible.

This analysis, based on standard optical principles, and information supplied by Kingston George, thus generally supports the observations and testimony of Jacobs and Mansmann.[24]

Déjà Vu All Over Again

On June 17, 1974, the *Hobart* (Australia) Mercury carried the following news item, based on an article appearing the same day in *The New York Times*:

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama – Experts at an Army missile- base say they are puzzled about strange 'ghost ships' picked up by powerful radar scanner in the Pacific during a tracking exercise last summer.

There has been little official comment on what the scientists found during the exercise, but Major Dallas Van Hoose, an Army spokesman, confirmed recently that 'some unexplained aerial phenomena' were observed during the exercise last August [1973]. Scientists, many of whom are reluctant to be named in interviews because of general public skepticism over unidentified flying objects, say privately they have been unable to find any explanation for the 'ghost ships.'

'We have never seen anything precisely like this before,' said one ballistic

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missile defense expert who works for an Army agency here and who is familiar with the advanced radar used to test missiles and warheads. Huntsville houses the Army's ballistic missile defense systems command which tests in the Kwajelein Atoll region of the Marshall Island Trust Territory held by the U.S.

Last August the Air Force launched a Minuteman ICBM from Vandenberg Air Force base aimed for the Kwajelein missile range which is used by the Army, Air Force, and Navy. The radar experts in the Pacific found they were also tracking an unidentified flying object next to the ICBM's nose cone. Radar picked up an inverted saucer- shape object to the right and above the descending nose cone and watched it cross the warhead's trajectory to a point which was below and to-the-left of it before the phantom ship disappeared. The ghost ship was described as being 10-feet high and 40-feet long. Two separate radar systems saw it at the same time which may eliminate the probability that there was a malfunction in one of the radar systems. It was also reported that 3 other identical objects were seen in the vicinity – the same size, shape, and dimensions. One scientist said the data indicated that the phantom ship 'flew under its own power' but cold not explain what sort of 'power' was involved.

So far none of the experts here believe the ghost ship was a natural phenomenon caused by freak weather conditions or echoes commonly seen on radar screens.[25]

So, apparently, the incident described by Jacobs and Mansmann was not unique. Regarding the ballistic missile expert's statement about never having seen "anything precisely like this before", given that the 1964 Bis: Sur incident was immediately classified Top Secret—with only a handful of individuals knowing the facts—it would have been unknown to other military and civilian personnel conducting missile tests a decade later. As for the UFO's apparent shape, I'm unclear as to how radar could have determined it was an "inverted saucer". This statement seems to be a garbled journalistic description, which inadvertently combined both radar and photographic data,

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as described by the source.

Researcher Barry Greenwood later reprinted this newspaper story in his co-authored book, *Clear Intent* (later republished as *The UFO Cover-up*). He wrote, “When FOIA inquiries were filed with the Army, they denied having any records concerning the sighting. We were referred to Vandenberg AFB, California. Vandenberg responded that ‘in accordance with Air Force manual 12-50 which implements the Federal Records Act, the launch operations records for August 1973 have been destroyed.’ Note that it is not stated that the UFO tracking report was destroyed, only a very general statement is given that ‘launch operations records' were destroyed. That [records of] such a mysterious event as this would not be kept somewhere for possible future use is incomprehensible. Yet this excuse is offered time and time again to deny access to records...”[26]

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10. Everyone Escalates

Perhaps predictably, as the destructive power of nuclear weapons increased spectacularly over time, so did plans for their use in warfare. In 1948, the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon secretly approved Project Trojan, a planned atomic attack—should it ever be ordered by the president—on 30 Soviet cities. One year later, this relatively limited strategy was dramatically expanded when U.S. Air Force General Curtis LeMay, Commander of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), approved a new strike plan titled, "Killing a Nation", involving the use of 133 atomic bombs against 70 Soviet cities, or more than twice the previous number of targets. As U.S.-Soviet tensions escalated throughout the 1950s, preparations for all-out war expanded exponentially. By 1960, SAC's plan for a knockout blow against the Soviet block nations envisioned the use of 3,000 nuclear weapons against 1,000 targets.[1]

Of course, the Russians had similar war plans for the U.S. and her allies in Europe. In November 1955, Soviet scientists successfully detonated their own megaton-range hydrogen bomb, thereby launching a full-scale thermonuclear arms race. Over the next three decades, the situation was to become far more ominous. By the mid-1980s, the two superpowers possessed between them *67,500* atomic and thermonuclear weapons![2]

But that era, when gross overkill would seem ordinary, was years in the future. In the early 1960s, as strategic missile testing continued apace, the Pentagon's resolute deployment of ICBMs—the new weapon system of choice—proceeded without interruption. By 1965, Atlas and Titan I missiles were being phased out by the Air Force, and replaced by Titan H, Minuteman I and II missiles, which were more reliable and easier to protect. Within two years, over a thousand of these ICBMs were in place—scattered across the U.S. outside Air Force bases in Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Kansas, Missouri, Arizona and Arkansas.

The Titan II ICBMs were second-generation liquid-fueled missiles deployed from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. The Titan II had an effective range of 5,500 miles and carried a single 9-megaton nuclear warhead—the

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largest ever deployed by the U.S. Air Force. Titan I|s were based at three locations: Davis-Monthan AFB, in Tucson, Arizona; Little Rock AFB, at Jacksonville, Arkansas; and McConnell AFB, outside Wichita, Kansas. Each base bad two squadrons of nine missiles each for a total of 18 per location.

In 1969, the founders of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), Coral and Jim Lorenzen, published, *UFOs—The Whole Story*, in which they briefly mentioned an intriguing UFO sighting at a nuclear missile complex some 27 miles north of Tucson, Arizona. The site, designated 570-1, was operated by the 570th Strategic Missile Squadron, based at Davis-Monthan AFB. The Lorenzens wrote,

... [The incident occurred] on the night of August 7 [1962] at a Titan missile site in the vicinity of Oracle, Arizona. The case was never published in the press for reasons that will become obvious, but nevertheless it was possible for APRO to obtain the basic information:

Our first informant refused to give his name for publication for fear of some kind of official reprisal for talking about the incident, but within five weeks we were able to obtain corroborating information from two other witnesses, both of whom are known to us but who must also remain anonymous. About midnight that night one of the night crew who was outside the complex spotted a brilliant light which seemed to be getting larger and larger. He soon realized the thing was descending directly over the site, so he went inside and told another man who came out and watched with him. Before long the object had become so large that both of the men were frightened and went back inside the complex where they informed Davis-Monthan Air Force Base at Tucson by telephone.

Two jet interceptors came streaking in from the direction of the base, but as they approached, the object took off fast toward the north and was out of sight within seconds. The jets circled the area and headed back for the base. Minutes later, the 'visitor' was back again, descended toward the silo, then took off vertically and dwindled to nothingness overhead. The object was described by all as having an appearance similar to that of the full moon.

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Other testimony indicated that a similar object was seen either the night before or the night after this incident.[3]

Unfortunately, other than this 1969 account, nothing more has been written about this incident and I only learned of it many years after it was first reported. Despite my attempts to locate former or retired Air Force personnel who might have first-hand information about the case, the details remain elusive.

However, in researching the report, I did discover one fact: if the published date of the sighting—August 7, 1962—is correct, then the missile site in question was not yet functional and no missile was in the silo during the incident. Historical data indicate that while the 390th Strategic Missile Wing —composed of the 570th and 571st Strategic Missile Squadrons—was the first Titan 11 wing to be activated, on January 1,1962, the first Titan was not actually installed in its silo until December 8, 1962. Furthermore, it was not until March 31, 1963 that the first manned missile complex became operational. Since the sites were not yet activated, I can only surmise that it was contract workers who reported the sighting, and not Air Force personnel, who would not have been on site until it was "accepted" and was at a stage where protection and security were required. At that stage, anyone who reported a UFO would most likely have been Air Force security personnel.

In the case of the new Minuteman I and II ICBMs, each missile would be protected in its own underground concrete and steel silo, known as a Launch Facility (LF). These were to be separated from one another by a few miles, to ensure maximum survivability in the event of a Soviet nuclear strike. The missiles were organized into groups of 10, called "flights", and given an alphabetical designation (e.g. Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, etc.). Each missile in a given flight would be connected by shielded, underground electrical cables to a central Launch Control Capsule (LCC), also located underground and staffed by a two-man team of launch officers on 24-hour alert duty. In time of war, after receiving orders, the officers would simultaneously turn two keys and launch their 10 ICBMs.

For protection against unauthorized intruders or sabotage, each LCC—

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located 60-feet underground, beneath a Launch Control Facility (LCF)—was assigned its own group of guards as well as a mobile security unit known as a Security Alert Team (SAT) which defended the launch facility and its widely-scattered missile silos.

The explosive blast generated by each 1-megaton warhead atop a Minuteman I or II missile would be equivalent to 60 Hiroshima-type bombs. Ultimately, each of the five U.S. Air Force Strategic Missile Wings that deployed Minutemen ICBMs had between 150 and 200 nuclear missiles under its jurisdiction. Those wings were based at Malmstrom AFB, Montana; F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming; Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota; Minot and Grand Forks AFBs, both in North Dakota.

Therefore, as the 1960s ended, the United States possessed an almost unimaginable measure of nuclear firepower. Poised for attack against the Soviet Union and other potential adversaries, and awaiting only a presidential order to launch, land-based ICBMs—together with large numbers of nuclear bombers and submarine-based SLBMs—constituted Americas strategic arsenal during the Cold War era.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe, the Soviet military had amassed a formidable nuclear arsenal of its own, which it targeted against the U.S. and its allies. The resulting, aptly-named “balance of terror” between the superpowers kept the entire world on edge for decades.

Coincidentally or not, UFO activity at ICBM sites appeared to escalate during the 1960s as well. If UFOs were not sighted more frequently—something that would be difficult to determine with precision—the phenomenons actions were certainly more audacious. Although UFOs had been sighted at F.E. Warren AFB’s Atlas missile sites in the early 1960s, their next known appearance, above several Minuteman missile sites, on August 1, 1965, was nothing less than spectacular. Fortunately, those incidents were documented in stunning detail by the Air Forces UFO investigations group, Project Blue Book.

By that time, the base, located at Cheyenne, Wyoming, had phased- out its obsolete Atlas nuclear missiles and installed in their place the less vulnerable and more powerful Minuteman I ICBMs. At the time of the documented incidents, the 90th Missile Strategic Missile Wing over 200 scattered across

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the tri-state area of Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska.

Beginning at 1:30 a.m. on August 1, 1965, various personnel at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming—including the base commander—telephoned the Air Forces UFO Project Blue Book, at Wright-Patterson AFB, to report several UFOs near the base's Minuteman Launch Control Facilities designated Echo (E), Golf (G), and Quebec (Q), and at Launch Facilities designated B-4, E-2, G-l, and H-2.

The Officer-on-Duty at Blue Book that night was a Lt. Anspaugh (first name unknown), who carefully logged the flurry of incoming calls.[4] Shortly thereafter, an official memorandum was written which summarized the information that had been reported to him. Following the closure of Project Blue Book four years later, the contents of the memo were published in 1972, by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who had served as the civilian scientific consultant to the project at the time of the sightings.

The significance of this Air Force memorandum can not be understated. It documents a series of stunning UFO sightings by various individuals stationed at the missile base, including several security guards posted at Warrens ICBM sites.

THE LOG ENTRIES:

1:30 a.m. - Captain Snelling, of the U.S. Air Force command post near Cheyenne, Wyoming, called to say that 15 to 20 phone calls had been received at the local radio station about a large circular object emitting several colors but no sound, sighted over the city. Two officers and one airman controller at the base reported that after being sighted directly over base operations, the object had begun to move rapidly to the northeast.

2:20 a.m. - Colonel Johnson, base commander of Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, near Cheyenne, Wyoming, called [Blue Book] to say that the commanding officer of the Sioux Army Depot saw five objects at 1:45 A.M. and reported an alleged configuration of two UFOs previously reported over E Site. At 1:49 a.m. members of E flight reportedly saw what appeared to be the same [formation] reported at 1:48 a.m. by G flight. Two security teams were dispatched from E flight to investigate.

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2:50 a.m. - Nine more UFOs were sighted, and at 3:35 a.m. Colonel Williams, commanding officer of the Sioux Army Depot, at Sydney, Nebraska, reported five UFOs going east.

4:05 a.m. - Colonel Johnson made another phone call to [Blue Book] to say that at 4:00 a.m., Q flight reported nine UFOs in sight; four to the northwest, three to the northeast, and two over Cheyenne.

4:40 a.m. - Captain Howell, Air Force Command Post, called [Blue Book] and Defense Intelligence Agency to report that a Strategic Air Command Team at Site H-2 at 3:00 a.m. reported a white oval UFO directly overhead. Later Strategic Air Command Post passed the following: Francis E. Warren Air Force Base reports (Site B-4 3:17 a.m.) - A UFO 90 miles east of Cheyenne at a high rate of speed and descending—0Va| and white with white lines on its sides and a flashing red light in its center moving east; reported to have landed 10 miles east of the site.

3:20 a.m. - Seven UFOs reported east of the site. 3:25 a.m. - E Site reported six UFOs stacked vertically. 3:27 a.m. - G-l reported one ascending and at the same time, E-2 reported two additional UFOs had joined the seven for a total of nine.

3:28 a.m. - G-l reported a UFO descending further, going east. 3:32 a.m. - The same site has a UFO climbing and leveling off. 3:40 a.m. - G Site reported one UFO at 70’ azimuth and one at 120’ Three now came from the east, stacked vertically, passed through the other two, with all five heading west.

END OF LOG ENTRIES

This Blue Book memorandum reveals, in dramatic detail, the extraordinary nature of the incidents. The sheer scope and blatant ostentation of the UFOs’ reported aerial displays is simply astonishing. Several widely-separated Air Force security police teams had independently observed up to nine UFOs in a group as they cavorted in the sky and intermittently hovered above various Minuteman Launch Facilities (missile silos) and Launch Control Facilities.

Two of those teams, positioned several miles apart, had reported the objects to be oval-shaped, while other observers in the city of Cheyenne had

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reported a “circular” UFO. Furthermore, two base commanders—Colonel Robert Johnson at Warren AFB, and a Colonel Williams at the Sioux Army Depot—had been among those who had reported the sightings to Project Blue Book.

When Blue Book’s former scientific consultant, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, published these telephone log entries in his 1972 book, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry*, he also revealed that he had once asked the project’s chief about the ICBM-related sighting reports referenced in it He wrote, “When I asked Major Quintinilla what was being done about investigating these reports, he said that the sightings were nothing but stars! This is certainly tantamount to saying that our Strategic Air Command, responsible for the defense of our country against major attacks from the air, was staffed by a notable set of incompetents who mistook twinkling stars for strange craft.”[5]

Given the wealth of detail about the rapidly-maneuvering and sometimes hovering aerial objects mentioned in Lt. Anspaugh’s notes, this explanation was patently absurd, and Hynek’s annoyance at the remark is obvious. Regrettably, the “stars” answer offered by Major Quintinilla was a typical example of the innumerable dubious rationalizations and wholly inadequate solutions publicly offered by Project Blue Book over the years, for what were arguably legitimate UFO sightings.

Indeed, after Captain Ed Ruppelt s departure from the project in 1952, Project Blue Book’s public explanations for UFO sightings became, on the whole, increasingly less believable, something Hynek himself pointed out on more than one occasion in later years. By the time of the project’s closure in 1969, its dismissive pronouncements about UFOs had become notorious, and were openly mocked by many in the press, and scoffed at by countless Americans.

Behind the scenes, however, Blue Book staffers were slowly amassing a wealth of high-quality sighting reports, including some from Minuteman missile guards at Minot AFB, North Dakota. In other words, the incidents at F.E. Warren AFB summarized by Lt. Anspaugh were hardly unique. When physicist Dr. James E. McDonald was later granted access to the project’s files, he wrote, “As a result of several trips Project Blue Book, I’ve had an

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opportunity to examine quite carefully and in detail the types of reports that are made by Blue Book personnel...There are hundreds of good cases in the Air Force files that should have led to top-level scientific scrutiny of [UFOs] years ago, yet these cases have been swept under the rug in a most disturbing way by Project Blue Book investigators and their consultants."[6]

The last comment was an intentional dig at Dr. Hynek, whom McDonald believed to be complicit in the project's less-than-candid handling of its UFO reports. McDonald firmly believed that the Air Force was deliberately downplaying and withholding the best UFO sighting reports, thereby denying them to the scientific community, as well as the public at large. Documents later released via the Freedom of Information Act, well after McDonald's death in 1971, would ultimately prove his contention to be correct.

In any event, the Anspaugh memorandum later published by Hynek is not the only source of credible information about UFO sightings at F.E. Warren AFB in the summer of 1965. I have interviewed two former Minuteman missile launch officers—formally known as Missile Combat Crew Commanders, or Deputy Commanders—who served at the base during that year, Richard Tashner and Jay Earnshaw. Each of them made some remarkable statements about the UFO incidents, and the manner in which the Air Force handled them.

In September 2002, the Association of Air Force Missileers (AAFM) published an article of mine in its newsletter, in which I first summarized my research and then requested other former nuclear missile personnel to contact me with their own UFO experiences.[7] In response, I received an email from AAFM member Captain Richard E. Tashner (USAF Ret.), in which he described his UFO encounter at F.E. Warren AFB in the late 1960s. I later interviewed him by telephone. I have combined his comments here.

Tashner told me, "I was stationed at F.E. Warren AFB, Cheyenne, Wyoming from December 1964 through June 1969. Initially, I was a deputy missile launch officer assigned to the 320th Strategic Missile Squadron, but when I upgraded to missile commander, I was transferred to the 319th SMS. I do remember one time when we had to send in reports to SAC Headquarters about UFO sightings in the area. At the time, I was in a [launch] capsule near Sydney, Nebraska. I think I was in the Golf [Flight] capsule. Of course, I did

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not personally see anything as I was underground. I did take the information from various individuals... including the Security Alert Teams, and some people upstairs [in the Launch Control Facility]."

Tashner continued, "My reports were all made to the Wing Command Post at F.E. Warren, and they would relay them to SAC HQ. Most communications back and forth from Wing to SAC could be heard in each LCF so the crew would be aware of developing situations. Every time one of my guards called down to report that the UFOs had moved closer or further away, or whatever, I updated SAC. I made four or five calls to the command post that night. I remember there were so many reports coming in to them—not only from me but lots of [launch officers]—that SAC. decided to cut-off all report calls. They were required [to be submitted as] written reports the next day. There were also sightings around the Cheyenne area the same night. There were no interceptors around to chase the UFOs because F.E. Warren had no runway or planes. I wish I could remember the actual date for you, but I've forgotten long ago."

I asked Tashner if he had been on alert duty in August 1965. He thought a few moments and said, "Yes, I was. I was a deputy [missile] commander back then." I then described the contents of the Blue Book memo and offered to email a copy to him.

He responded, "Well, that sounds like the incident I witnessed. I know that the commander of the Sydney depot made several reports that night. Now looking back, I think I remember talking to him myself and took his report. I think I also gave him the Wing Command Post number for him to call for verification. That's probably how he got the Project Blue Book number. My own guards kept calling down to report strange lights moving around the sky, sort of like aircraft lights but not quite. One of them told me he saw one light do a 90-degree turn. I was very skeptical, but I didn't see it myself, of course, so I don't know. Actually, at first, the calls were kind of fun, you know, out of the ordinary. But as more of them came in, it got very spooky."

I asked Tashner whether he had been debriefed by OSI or other investigators. He responded, "I do not know of anyone being interviewed by the OSI or being told not to talk about the experience."

I then asked if the functionality of the Minuteman missiles had been

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inexplicably compromised during the period of UFO activity. Tashner replied, “I do not remember the effect it had on missile alert.” I pressed the point and asked if he had later heard any rumors about missiles malfunctioning at a time when UFOs were in their vicinity. He replied, “No, I never heard anything about that. I know that my own missiles were not adversely affected.”

Tashner recommended that I contact two other former Minuteman launch officers who had been at F.E. Warren during his tour there: Jay Earnshaw and Larry Johnson. This fortuitous suggestion would result in my speaking with one of the missile launch officers who had been directly involved in one of the more dramatic incidents mentioned in the memorandum written by Lt. Anspaugh, and he would have some remarkable things to say.

During a telephone interview, Jay Earnshaw told me, “I was a captain, a Missile Combat Crew Commander or, early on, a Deputy Commander, primarily at Echo Flight. Between 1965 and 1968, except for assignments overseas, I was with all three squadrons at Warren—the 319th, the 320th and the 321st. Echo was assigned to the 319th. We did have [UFO] sightings at Echo Flight. There were times that our security forces up above would report strange things. Lights in the sky. Because I was a missile commander, the security people were required to call down to the capsule and report anything unusual going on up there. The information we got about the UFOs was that none of them came inside the fenced area [around the Echo Launch Control Facility], and none of them touched-down in the area outside the fence. As reported by the on-duty security controller, the [unexplained] lights visible from Echo Flight would have extended from the northwest to the southeast. So they were all just strange aerial lights, making no noise, that would *stack on top of one another* [my emphasis] and then just disappear.”

I asked Earnshaw if he could recall any specific description of the aerial lights. He said, “The security people described them as oblong or, from the correct perspective, disc-like. No reported markings or navigation lights. If a color was reported, it was usually reddish or orange-ish shades. They were reported as 'aloft' or ‘up in the air’ but I don’t recall any mention of altitude—no reliable estimated distance other than ‘close.’”

He continued, “At first, I thought of temperature inversions because I’m

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technically-oriented. I'm a pilot and I know that the atmosphere can create illusions [involving refracted lights that appear nearby but arc actually miles away], I tend to hold things off at arm's length and consider all of the possibilities."

I asked Earnshaw about the approximate time-frame for those incidents. He responded, "The sightings at Echo were around 1965, '66, '67—probably more around the beginning of that period and tapering off around the end. There were times when that went on at more than one [launch control] site. They were not reported during daylight hours"

Earnshaw then said, "There was a continuing ruckus about those kinds of sightings and, ultimately, we were told by the Operations Branch officers to ignore them. As everything is 'down-channel' in the military, they themselves were probably told by the Squadron Commanders who, in turn, were probably advised by the 'Wing King' to stifle the 'ridiculous reports, and he was probably directed by SAC [Headquarters] to pass that along to the launch officers. They told us that UFOs had been officially disavowed by Project Blue Book, that they had turned out to be swamp gas and weather balloons and all that jazz. After awhile, [the launch commanders] started saying, 'Well, it's going to affect my OER (Officer Efficiency Report) if I keep insisting on this.' We were led to believe that if we continued to report those sightings, it would lead to a loss of our credibility. So, instead of notifying the Wing Command Post, we just started logging those reports down and then never heard another thing about it."

Earnshaw added, "I heard that OSI (the Office of Special Investigations) was debriefing people. OSI was charged with doing whatever tin commanders above them wanted done. That was one of the reasons why we didn't want to report the sightings—we didn't want to get involved with OSI. You never knew what could happen to you should they start looking into your professional and personal lives. Even an innocent can spend a great deal of his precious off-duty time giving statements, and so on. Also, even though they were not officially allowed into your OER's, the crews knew that OSI questions, and the answers you might give, could seriously sway the commanders' rating your performance reports."

I asked Earnshaw to estimate the number of UFO-related calls he had

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received from the security police topside at Echo. He said, “There were a few. It wasn’t a multitude of calls. Those calls were eventually discouraged by higher command, as I mentioned a moment ago. There was a lot of pressure by Blue Book to keep this under wraps and, you know, they were saying publicly that there was nothing to [UFOs] and all that. But [among the missile launch commanders] there were reports by word of mouth. The sightings of I August [1965] that you mentioned a moment ago, I heard about those. But it was one of those things that was never officially acknowledged. I heard about it through scuttlebutt and, sometimes, scuttlebutt is the best A-number one source [of information], particularly in situations where the primary concern is security.”

Earnshaw then said firmly, “But we got reports from our security people that there were objects in the sky stacked up, one on top of the other, just hovering there. The Russians sure didn’t have the capability to do that! So that leaves only one other possibility. I am one who believes that we are not the only ones in the Universe and, well, I think someone might have been interested in what we were doing at our [nuclear missile] sites. I wasn’t one of the witnesses to these events, because I was underground in the capsule, but my second-hand information from the security people up above was that the objects were really there.”

Although Earnshaw said that he had only heard about the incidents of August 1, 1965,I quickly wondered if that was correct. I am aware of only two reported sighting incidents—at any SAC base, during any era—during which the Air or Security Police had reported UFOs “stacked” above a Launch Control Facility, and both of those occurred at F.E. Warren AFB, on August 1st, 1965. More to the point, one of the reports was at the Echo Flight LCF, where Earnshaw usually pulled alert duty. As noted above, the Project Blue Book telephone log compiled by Lt. Anspaugh had stated:

3:25 a.m. - E [Echo] Site reported six UFOs stacked vertically.

I told Earnshaw that because the SPs had told him that the UFOs were stacked-up over Echo during one of the incidents, I was inclined to believe that he may have actually been in the launch capsule for the August 1st event. He replied, “I guess it could’ve been. I pulled alert there that month too, as well as [during most of] ‘66, and ‘68, as I previously mentioned.” I asked

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Earnshaw if he recalled hearing scuttlebutt about missiles dropping off alert status at a time when UFOs were in the vicinity of a given missile flight. He paused awhile and then said, “Well, of course, we would often have a missile go off alert, but not in any unusual way The guidance system wouldn’t spin-up right, for one reason or another. But, yes, I heard reports like that—of [several] missiles going off alert simultaneously [during the UFO incidents] —but I wasn’t privy to the big picture, only the narrow one. Nothing like that happened at Echo when I was there.” I quickly pressed for details about the reports he had heard. After another pause, Earnshaw said somewhat warily, “It was a long time ago, and what I heard was second-hand.” It seemed clear that this particular line of questioning would elicit no more useful information, for one reason or another.

At the end of the conversation, once I had Earnshaw’s testimony on record, I told him about the two UFO-related, large-scale missile shutdowns at Malmstrom AFB, in March 1967. Obviously surprised, he responded, “Really?! Twice? Wow! That’s a national security situation!”

I thanked Earnshaw for allowing me to publish his comments and told him I strongly believed that this kind of information should finally be in the public record. He responded, “I couldn’t agree with you more.”

In 2002, I interviewed former Air Force Security Policeman (SP) Terry Stuck, who related similar experiences near F.E. Warren AFB in “late summer of 1965.” Stuck had reported for duty at the Oscar Flight LCF one morning, and was informed about a UFO sighting by the departing night-shift guards. “The night team had observed fast moving lights or objects,” said Stuck, “vehicles moving with incredible speed.” Apparently, during the shift-change, the departing security team leader also informed the arriving missile commander about the UFOs. Stuck overheard the exchange. “The OIC (Officer in Charge) was a Captain. I don't recall his name,” said Stuck, “I do remember him saying that he had been a pilot in Korea and had observed UFOs and had reported the incident. He said they had sent him to the base psychiatrist and had basically put a stop on advancements in his career.”

The moral of this story was clear to Stuck and the departing security team leader: Be careful what you report because there may be repercussions. Stuck did not know whether the team leader had ever filed an official report about

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the incident. In any event, the Oscar Flight UFO sighting incident is not mentioned in the Project Blue Book memorandum quoted above, perhaps it took place on another date during that period or, perhaps, it did indeed occur on August 1st, but went unreported.

A few days after these events, Stuck had his own UFO sighting, again at the Oscar Flight LCF. "The observations," he recalled, "were actually made in front of the launch control security facility which was at ground level, facing the access gate of the main launch control facility. I was never able to determine the size or shapes [of the UFOs]. When I saw them, they were at extreme distances and were doing right [-angle] turns at unbelievable speeds. I never heard any sounds."

Another UFO report at F.E. Warren during that period appears in the National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS) sighting database. The report was filed by an unidentified individual who had seen a UFO in the Foxtrot Flight area on an unspecified date in August 1965. Although the source remains anonymous, because the sighting occurred within the missile field itself, he was probably an Air Force security policeman. The witness reports observing a dark boomerang-shaped object with two yellow lights, one on each wingtip. He wrote, "When it took off it went so fast that the lights on the ends appeared as two continuous streaks of light for an instant." The UFO was described as silent and "very big".

A third Air Force Security Policeman, Bob Thompson, has reported seeing UFOs in F.E. Warren's missile fields. My interview with him, in 2004, was most interesting, to say the least. In fact, as was the case with Jay Earnshaw's report, the incident described by the SP may well be one of the sightings mentioned in Lt. Anspaugh's memorandum.

In 1965, Airman Second Class Robert Thompson was assigned to the 809th Combat Defense Squadron, at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming. He guarded the Quebec Flight Launch Control Facility (LCF), which controlled ten Minuteman I nuclear missiles, poised underground in launch facilities (LFs), commonly known as silos. While on duty one night, he suddenly got a call from the LCF's Missile Combat Crew Commander, asking him and his partner to walk outside and look straight up.

The launch crew in the capsule, and the guards topside, played practical

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jokes on one another quite often," Thompson recalled, "When 'he commander called for us to step outside and look straight up, I thought that it was another joke." However, as soon as he did so, Thompson's attitude instantly changed. Directly overhead, he saw eight stationary lights, much brighter and larger than stars, grouped together in four pairs. Due to their altitude and brilliance, it was not possible to determine the objects' shape or other details.

After a few moments, one light left its position and began to roam among the others, moving slowly from pair to pair. Thompson and his partner watched the mysterious aerial formation for about 10 minutes, before reporting the sighting to the missile commander. In response, Thompson was informed that NORAD, then located at Ent AFB, Colorado, had earlier notified F.E. Warren that its radars were tracking eight unknown objects hovering in the vicinity of the Quebec launch control site. Apparently, the base's Command Center had called the LCF and asked the missile commander to verify their presence.

Said Thompson, "I wasn't sure what we were seeing until I reported back to the launch commander. When he told me of the report of UFOs from NORAD, I could tell by his voice that he wasn't joking." He added, "Please note, at that time, I was not a believer in stories of UFOs and little green men."

Thompson said that he and his partner were never debriefed, or warned to remain silent about the incident, but he never again mentioned it to the missile commander. Thompson can't remember the names of the commander or his partner that night.

Significantly, the previously-noted Project Blue Book memorandum may actually describe Thompson's report. Among the log entries in it is this one:

4:05 a.m. - Colonel Johnson made another phone call to [Blue Book) to say that at

4:00 a.m., Q flight reported nine UFOs in sight: four to the northwest, three to the northeast, and two over Cheyenne.

Although Thompson recalls eight UFOs—all hovering directly above Q-Flight—and the Blue Book memorandum mentions nine—in three distinct groups, in various parts of the sky—the similarity between the two accounts is notable. It seems possible that Thompson's sighting occurred somewhat

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before, or somewhat after, the report mentioned in the memo. There would have been other personnel at the Quebec Launch Control Facility who could have phoned in a different sighting to F.E. Warrens missile command post, either earlier or later than Thompson's. Perhaps, by that time, the UFOs had scattered. This is, of course, speculation on my part.

On the other hand, because Thompson can't remember the exact date of his own sighting, it's possible that it may not have been among the numerous UFO sightings reported to Blue Book on August 1, 1965. (Thompson was stationed at F.E. Warren in 1963, when he guarded Atlas ICBM sites for two years. He left the base in December 1965.)

Regardless of the date of his sighting, Thompson recalls that his NCOIC, a Sgt. Talley, had told him that eight UFOs had also been observed over Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, the night after his own sighting. For the record, there were numerous, widely-reported sightings in Tulsa on August 2, 1965—one day after the F.E. Warren AFB sightings reported to Lt. Anspaugh—but I am personally unaware of any published reports from Tinker AFB, near Oklahoma City, on that date.

In any event, Thompson's sighting was not the last UFO incident to be reported at Quebec Flight during that period. Less than a week later, he had been approached by another individual in his unit, a Security Alert Team (SAT) member, and told about a far more dramatic incident.

"We worked three days on, three days off," Thompson said, "One crew would relieve the other. Shortly after the sighting, when my crew returned to the LCF, an acquaintance came up and told me that while we were off-duty, he had been involved in another UFO sighting, at one of Q-Flight's launch facilities."

According to this individual, he and his partner had been on Camper Alert Team stake-out duty one night, and were sitting in a security camper parked next to the missile launch facility. Without warning, the vehicle began to shake violently. He quickly leaned his head out the window and saw a large, very bright light silently hovering directly above the camper. After a few seconds, the shaking ceased and the light rapidly departed.

(Although this bizarre report is strikingly similar to a scene in Steven Spielberg's 1977 movie. *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, researchers Jim

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Klotz and Tom Tulien have heard another, nearly-identical account regarding two USAF missile guards who was stationed at Minot AFB, in North Dakota, in 1968. Tulien told me, "This 'second-hand' story was apparently provided to a B-52 crew [we interviewed] by the commander of the 810th Strategic Aerospace Division, during a debriefing following a UFO event at Minot on 24 October 1968… The navigator recalled being informed that a large brightly-lit UFO was hovering close above a SAT team vehicle at one of the missile sites, frightening the occupants… when their B-52 appeared over the base flight line the UFO went dark and lifted up in the direction of the B-52. [Similarly,] the co-pilot recalled being informed that a large UFO was hovering close over a SAT vehicle at one of the missile sites, which frightened the SAT team who exited their vehicle running away. Since the team did not report-in, a second SAT team was dispatched and found the first team on the ground unconscious with the paint burned off the top of the vehicle.")

Meanwhile, back at F.E. Warren, some three years earlier, the SAT guard went on to tell Bob Thompson that he and his partner had later been debriefed by an OSI agent and ordered not to talk about the incident. However, in spite of this warning, he had nevertheless felt compelled to compare notes with Thompson, whose own UFO experience had occurred less than a week earlier, and was common knowledge among the missile guards at Quebec Flight.

After hearing this strange story, Thompson approached the NCOIC who had been on duty at Quebec the night of the incident—whose name was Talley, or perhaps Robinson—and asked him to verify it. To his surprise, the NCOIC did so. Furthermore, he told Thompson that lie had personally seen the UFO as it hovered over the LF.

"The launch facility in question was the one located closest to the LCF," said Thompson, "Even though it was five, maybe six miles away, the NCOIC told me that, on the night of the incident, he had seen an extremely bright light hovering over its location." Thompson said that he later heard that the UFO activity at various missile flights had continued for about a month.

Over the years, he had more or less forgotten about the incident at Quebec Flight—until he read a message that I posted online, in which I asked for

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UFO sighting witnesses at FE Warren AFB to come forward with their stories.

As I do with all of my former USAF sources, I asked Thompson to speculate about the possible nature and purpose of the UFO activity he observed. He responded by saying that he thought the UFOs were extraterrestrial craft piloted by alien beings. “I try to look at us through their eyes,” he said, “I think mankind is on probation. We are immature children with very powerful toys. I hope they are here to protect us from ourselves, much as a parent would keep a child from touching a hot burner on the kitchen stove.”

Thompson is the second former USAF source I’ve interviewed who used the “hot stove” metaphor, in response to my question regarding the purpose of the ICBM surveillance/disruptions. He continued, “I certainly think they are here for their own protection and the protection of space. It may be all right for the child to clutter his own playpen with his toys, but not the whole house.”

Hynek Opens the Door

On August 2, 1965, one day after Project Blue Book received urgent reports about the impressive aerial displays near F.E. Warren AFB’s Minuteman missile sites, there were widespread UFO sightings by civilians in several Midwestern states, which were openly reported in the national media. Nevertheless, despite the extensive news coverage relating to these sightings, the earlier incidents at F.E. Warren AFB remained, for the moment, hidden from view.

The American public was first made aware of UFO sightings at nuclear missile sites sixteen months later, in December 1966, when astronomer Dr. J. Allen Hynek revealed one such case in an article written for the *Saturday Evening Post* magazine.[8]

Earlier in his career, Hynek had been an unabashed skeptic on UFOs, and had willingly served as the Air Forces scientific consultant for its last officially-acknowledged UFO study, Project Blue Book. After the project’s

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closure, however, Hynek reversed course and began speaking out publicly about the reality of UFOs. He later explained his conversion by saying that, while working with the Air Force, he had seen enough intriguing, inexplicable sighting reports come across his desk to convince him that something extraordinary was indeed occurring which could not be accounted for by the prosaic—and sometimes ludicrous—public explanations for which Blue Book had become infamous. Once the project closed down in 1969, Hynek began to openly express the opinion that the Air Force was being less than candid with the public regarding its interest in, and knowledge of, UFOs.

While such criticism was absent in his article for the Saturday Evening Post, Hynek did summarize an unclassified Air Force preliminary report relating to UFOs sighted at Minuteman missile silos near Minot AFB, North Dakota, during the summer of 1966. This in itself was a major contribution to the public's awareness of nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents.

According to the report, on August 24th, a missile officer in an underground launch control facility discovered that communications on his two-way radio were being disrupted by static. At the same time, Air Force security guards at ground level reported a UFO maneuvering in the vicinity. At one point, it appeared to land, whereupon missile site control dispatched a security "strike-team" to investigate. At about ten miles from the landing site, the team's radio was also disrupted by static. Shortly thereafter, the UFO was observed to become airborne and pass beneath a second, identical object which was higher up in the sky. The report stated that Air Force radar at Minot AFB had tracked both of the objects.

The revelations contained in Hynek's intriguing UFO article may have startled many of those who read it, but the story failed to receive follow- up media coverage and quickly faded from public consciousness. It would be another seven years before public discussion about UFO sightings at nuclear missile sites again broke through the wall of official silence.

UFO researcher Raymond Fowler had also learned about the Minot case, as well as other UFO sightings near ICBM sites, as a result of his employment with Sylvania Corporation, one of the Minuteman missile contractors. Realizing these cases were important, and believing in the public's right to know the facts, Fowler spoke openly about them in an

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interview with the *Christian Science Monitor*, published on December 5, 1973. Titled, "Air Force Denies UFO Incident", the article says in part:

A United States missile program supervisor claims that mysterious unidentified flying objects have seriously imperiled national security. The Air Force denies it. Raymond E. Fowler, project supervisor on a Minuteman missile program near Boston, asserts that [UFOs] have penetrated the restricted air space above America's missile sites, jamming vital electronic equipment. He also says the objects eluded fighter aircraft scrambled to intercept them…

Specifically, Mr. Fowler says he talked with an Air Force officer who had been in one of the subterranean Launch Control Facilities of a North Dakota Minuteman site on August 1966, when radar operators picked up a UFO maneuvering over the base at 100,000 feet. The officer declared that the LCF's sophisticated radio equipment, that enables it to receive firing instructions from coordinating centers and transmit them to the silo Launch Facilities was blocked out by static when the UFO hovered directly over it. Mr. Fowler recalls the officer saying that he could conceive of 'nothing, on earth' that could caused the equipment to malfunction from such an altitude, emphasizing that it was working perfectly before the object appeared overhead and after it left.

Asked to comment on Mr. Fowler's allegations, an Air Force spokesman in Washington declared that SAC, that operates the site, 'could find nothing in its unit histories to confirm the presence of unidentified flying objects over it or indeed malfunctions in its equipment on the date mentioned.'

Despite the Air Force's denial Dr. Hynek insists that the base was buzzed by a UFO. 'I went there as the Air Force representative and talked to the people concerned after it happened,' he says. Dr. Hynek was at that time acting as scientific consultant to Project Bluebook. Mr. Fowler says he was told that communications between land strike- teams dispatched to a spot where the

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first UFO appeared to land and intercepting aircraft were completely jammed by strong radio interference. Moreover, he says, missile site control found intense static disrupting communications with its strike-teams.

After UFOs had streaked away, Mr. Fowler claims that Air Force Intelligence teams, descended on the base telling those who had seen or heard anything to keep quiet...He cites a Joint Chiefs of Staff regulation last updated in 1966, that establishes a system for reporting UFO sightings to the Aerospace Defense Command at Colorado Springs... and imposes penalties for the unauthorized disclosure of UFO information. But says an Air Force spokesman, 'We're out of the UFO business.'[9]

As Fowler later revealed, this article resulted in his being reprimanded by Sylvania, after an angry call to the company by the Air Force. The 1966 UFO incident at Minot AFB, and other such incidents, were later mentioned by Fowler in his books, *UFOs: Interplanetary Visitors* and *Casebook of a UFO Investigator*.

Missile Shutdowns at Ellsworth AFB

Elsewhere in 1966, a similar—but more dramatic—incident involving UFOs and nukes reportedly occurred near Ellsworth Air Force Base, outside Rapid City, South Dakota. In 1962, Ellsworth had become the home of the 44th Strategic Missile Wing which, at the time of the incident, controlled 150 Minuteman I missiles.

In 1993, I interviewed former U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Albert Spodnik, who divulged a dramatic UFO experience at a missile silo located northeast of the base. In 1966, Spodnik had been a missile maintenance technician assigned to the 67th Strategic Missile Squadron at Ellsworth.

One summer night, Spodnik and a fellow Electro-Mechanical Team technician were dispatched to a Launch Facility code-named Juliet- 03 to correct an electrical malfunction. For some reason, both the commercial

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power supply to the site and the emergency power system had simultaneously failed, rendering the Minuteman I missile temporarily inoperable. In Air Force parlance, the ICBM had “gone off alert status”. Following standard procedure, the two technicians drove to the site in an equipment-laden Crew Cab, escorted by an Air Force security guard.

After restoring power to the launch facility, Spodnik and his partner began an automated start-up procedure which would return the missile to normal operational status. When they left the underground silo to take a break, the technicians’ security escort alerted them to a sudden, excited exchange over the Crew Cab’s two-way radio. As the men listened, they learned that an armed Air Force Security Alert Team had been ordered to investigate a triggered security alarm at Launch Facility Juliet-05, located some six miles away. Furthermore, the missile there had abruptly dropped off alert status. As with Juliet-03, the site had lost commercial electrical power and its diesel-powered generator, designed to charge back-up batteries, had failed to start.

When the Security Alert Team arrived at Juliet-05, they reported that a strange object was sitting on the ground inside the security fence that surrounded the missile silo. As Spodnik and his companions eavesdropped, they heard the Flight Security Controller order the SAT to approach the object. Obviously upset, the team leader responded that he would not do so. He said that his team was parked outside the gate to the launch facility but would go no further. He then reported that the mysterious object was round, metallic, and resting on a tripod landing gear.

As this drama was unfolding over the radio, Spodnik and his companions quickly climbed up on the Crew Cab’s roof and flat bed to get better view of the adjacent missile silo, which was about four miles away. Gazing across the flat, open terrain, they noticed an intense glow that seemed to envelop the entire launch facility, much brighter than the security lights located there.

By this time, the Flight Security Controller had notified Juliet Flight’s Launch Commander about the situation. Spodnik could only hear the radio conversation between the Flight Security Controller and the Security Alert Team, but the Launch Commander had apparently ordered the team to approach the unidentified object. Once again, the team leader refused. In a strained voice, he abruptly asked for permission to fire on the object. In

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response, the Flight Security Controller yelled, “Negative! Don’t shoot until you know what’s going on!” He then informed the agitated security team leader that the Launch Commander had ordered the men to stand-by while he called the Missile Command Post at Ellsworth AFB. After a few moments, the team leader was told that a helicopter was being sent to the site.

Spodnik said that shortly after this exchange, all of the radio transmissions were “patched” into a single channel to permit direct communication between the those aboard the helicopter, Juliet Flight personnel, and the Security Alert Team leader. This also incidentally allowed Spodnik and his companions to overhear the conversations of all those involved. They soon learned that on board the helicopter were the Base Commander, the Wing Commander, the Missile Maintenance Commander, the Civil Engineering Commander and the Base Hospital Commander. This was extraordinary, to say the least. As Spodnik told the author, “It would have practically taken an Act of Congress to get all those guys out to that site—and at night too! Helicopters usually didn’t fly at night, unless it was absolutely necessary, because of safety reasons.” The fact that this elite group had been so quickly assembled suggests that they may have already been on alert at the base, perhaps relating to the earlier missile failure at Juliet-03.

Spodnik said that about 30 minutes after the Command Post had been notified about the UFO landing, he saw the helicopter in the distance, as it approached the stricken launch facility. When it was about five minutes away, someone screamed into the radio, “There it goes!” Instantly, Spodnik saw a brilliant white light directly above Juliet-05, ascending vertically at enormous velocity. He said that it had the appearance of an “inverted flashlight beam”.

Jumping off the Crew Cab’s roof, Spodnik gaped at the other men in astonishment. Thoroughly intrigued, they all continued to listen intently to the radio. After the UFO had left the vicinity, the Security Alert Team leader was heard to say that he was preparing to enter the launch facility's gate, but someone ordered him not to proceed until the helicopter arrived. Once it had landed, everyone went onto the site together. It was reported that there was no obvious damage to the missile silo, but three indentations were discovered in the gravel nearby, in a triangular pattern, with each mark approximately 25 feet from the others.

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Suddenly, the launch facility's commercial power came back on-line, prompting the Launch Commander to exclaim over the radio, "What did you do to restore power?" Someone answered, "We didn't do anything!" The silo itself couldn't be entered because no one present had the access codes. Spodnik said that the Security Alert Team was ordered to remain at Juliet-05 overnight, while the helicopter returned the "big wheels" to Ellsworth.

After the furor had subsided, Spodnik and his partner finished their work at Juliet-03 and returned to the base. Upon arriving, they and their security escort were met by the Maintenance Commander, Colonel Charles W. Slaughter, who promptly asked them if they had seen or heard anything unusual while at the launch facility. The security guard readily admitted to eavesdropping on the two-way radio, confessing that he was baffled by what had taken place at Juliet-05.

Glancing nervously at each other, Spodnik and the other technician impulsively denied having witnessed anything out of the ordinary. Both men told the commander that they had spent the entire visit to the launch facility underground, restoring the missile to alert status.

When I asked Spodnik why he had not admitted to listening to the radio chatter, he replied that he and his partner had previously heard rumors about missile technicians being relieved of duty for reporting strange occurrences at ICBM sites. "We heard about people reporting seeing things," he said, "Not necessarily UFOs, just anything oddball that couldn't be explained rationally. Those guys were ordered to report to the [base] hospital, examined, and medically discharged as mentally unfit for military service." Spodnik admitted that he didn't personally know of anyone who had been treated in this manner, but rumors to that effect had been circulating within his squadron.

Spodnik was undoubtedly referring to a Department of Defense regulation known as "PRP"—Personnel Reliability Program. As mentioned earlier, this directive is designed to govern the behavior of those who work with or around nuclear weapons. Under its guidelines, potentially severe consequences await those judged by their superiors to be psychologically unstable. Several former Air Force missile personnel interviewed by the author have said that, because of this regulation, they also had concerns about

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reporting their own UFO sighting, and often did not.

Spodnik said that Colonel Slaughter, upon hearing his denial, eyed him suspiciously and then ordered the two technicians to report to his office early the next morning. Arriving there, Spodnik noticed that the commander had with him an individual dressed in civilian clothes. This person was not introduced, said nothing, took no notes, but listened attentively as Spodnik and his partner answered the commander's questions about the events of the previous evening. Now very nervous, the pair nevertheless stuck to their story —they had seen and heard nothing. After a several-minute interrogation, the Maintenance Commander ordered the two men to report to duty.

When I asked Spodnik if he knew who the individual in civilian clothes may have been, he replied that while he didn't know for certain, he believed he was an agent of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) at Ellsworth. This assumption was based on a rumor he that subsequently heard.

Spodnik further stated that the neither he nor his partner ever saw their security escort again. Ordinarily, standard duty rotation would have ensured that the same individual be assigned to accompany Spodnik on some future maintenance call, but this never occurred. Spodnik assumed that the escort had been transferred to another base, but never did learn the reason for his sudden departure.

I believe that Spodnik is a credible source. While official documentation which would verify his statements is currently unavailable—unfortunately the rule in these highly-sensitive cases—I am of the opinion that the events reported by him did in fact occur as described.

The reported UFO incidents at Ellsworth AFB were undoubtedly of great concern to the Air Force. Although the unclassified report revealing similar events at Minot AFB that same year—later released by Dr. Hynek—did not mention missile malfunctions, per se, another credible report suggests that the ICBM-shutdown incidents at Ellsworth described by Spodnik were not isolated.

Another Shutdown at Malmstrom AFB

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According to researcher Raymond Fowler, one night in the early spring of 1966, at Malmstrom AFB, Montana, an entire flight of ten Minuteman missiles simultaneously malfunctioned just as a UFO was sighted in the vicinity of their launch control facility. Fowler had been told about the incident by a former launch control officer who joined Sylvania Corporation after his discharge. As noted earlier, during that period, Fowler worked for Sylvania, one of the Minuteman system contractors, and he had both civilian and military contacts at Malmstrom and other SAC bases. Although he later mentioned the missile shutdown incident in two of his books, Fowler did not reveal the exact flight involved. I later asked him if lie remembered it's designation but, by then, he had donated all of his UFO- related papers to researcher Barry Greenwood. Unfortunately, a subsequent search of those files failed to find any explicit reference to the designation of the flight that dropped off alert status. If his Air Force source had ever revealed it to Fowler, it had not been recorded in his research notes.

In any case, in 2003,I received this e-mail from former U.S. Air Force Air Policeman David Hughes:

Mr. Hastings,

... I was stationed at Malmstrom from Jan. 1966 through Aug. 1967. I was an Air Policeman, assigned to "B" flight, with the 341st CDS [Combat Defense Squadron], I worked at the Foxtrot [Launch Control Facility]. Many nights we observed a light in the sky between Choteau and Augusta, Montana.

This light would move at incredible speeds, make right- angle moves, and continue for hours. And when seeking further info from wing command, we were often insulted when told it was a Telstar satellite. On one occasion we were told by other friends working in the [Air Traffic Control] Tower at the base that aircraft had been launched to seek to identify a strange radar echo that had appeared on their screens and on the screens of the local airport. This was later denied...but if memory serves, the local newspaper had a story on it the next day. This must have happened sometime in early 1967 or late 1966.

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All I know is that some strange things consumed our attention MANY nights while on patrol. We patrolled from Augusta to Choteau each night and [often] saw something that lent credence to the UFO concept. To us UFO simply meant it was an Unidentified Flying Object, either from our military or some unknown source. We never believed the satellite story. However when we learned that the jets had been scrambled and the next day it was denied, then we knew something was up…

David Hughes
12/14/03

I was curious as to whether one of the UFO sightings mentioned in this account might relate to the full-flight missile shutdown incident reported by Ray Fowler, so I asked Hughes if he could recall an occasion when all 10 missiles at Foxtrot Flight had simultaneously dropped off alert status. He could not, but told me that he wouldn't have necessarily known about such an event, had it occurred.

In any case, the response Hughes and the others received from wing command—saying that the light they repeatedly observed was merely the Telstar satellite—was an absurd explanation. Telstar I and Telstar II were early communications satellites and, because they were not geostationary, were designed to relay signals for only a short period each time they orbited Earth. To the naked eye, either of them would have appeared as a bright star moving, at a moderate pace, in a deliberate arc across the sky, from horizon to horizon, with absolutely no deviation in its course. Therefore, neither Telstar could have accounted for the light the missile guards observed moving at "incredible speeds" while periodically executing "right-angle" turns. In fact, no satellite ever launched could account for the aerial acrobatics observed by Hughes and the other guards.

Vandenberg Again

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Although a much more dramatic pair of incidents would occur at Malmstrom AFB in March 1967, another ICBM-related UFO incursion apparently occurred one month earlier, at Vandenberg AFB, California, where the performance of Minuteman missiles continued to be tested by the Air Force.

At that time, Airman 1st Class Leroy Clark was a member of the 1381st Geodetic Survey Squadron, Detachment 1, located at Vandenberg. The elite squadron—which was actually based at FE Warren AFB, Wyoming—performed surveys at ICBM sites all over the U.S. and maintained the geodetic control system that was used to align the missiles' navigation systems.

Clark told me that a dramatic UFO sighting had occurred at a missile silo while he was stationed at Vandenberg. "I am 99% sure that the incident happened in February 1967," he said, "at a Minuteman site located on the north end of the base. I don't remember its exact designation. At the time we were working at another site a few miles north of the silo in question. There was a small range of mountains between our location and the other site. Actually, the members of my team did not personally see the UFO, but learned of its appearance from others, after returning to the squadron's [recreation room] from the night's survey work."

I interrupted Clark and asked him to briefly explain his duties. He replied, "I was a member of a three-man astronomic survey team. We were checking the coordinates of a Minuteman First-Order Survey quad on the far north end of the base. All such work is done at night. We had a quadrilateral set-up and were required to check the survey closure as well as measure the angles to 1st Order accuracy. That is, we 'occupied' each point of the quad and measured the angle between the other points of the quad including the north star Polaris. We were told the missile guidance system used one of the points of the quad to determine the exact position on the earth's surface. Our survey computations also corrected for the earth's curvature. Also, gravity anomalies were measured—not by us though—and that factor was thrown into the equation at some point. Bottom-line is they needed to know precisely the location of a missile silo on the earth's surface in order to accurately launch down-range. We also went to Eniwetok [atoll in the Pacific Ocean] to do survey work there on the missile splash-downs—all part of knowing with

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precision where the missile started from and where it ended."

Then Clark continued describing the UFO incident, "Oddly, none of us noticed anything. However, when we returned to the Dayroom—that's where we always gathered to play cards and watch TV—we found lots of commotion. That night, there were four or five guys there. They were all enlisted guys, surveyors. There had been a report, presumably from the lone Air Policeman stationed at the entrance to the other site, of an unidentified object approaching the Minuteman site from the west, from over the Pacific Ocean. It apparently approached the missile silo slowly and at a very low elevation. The UFO then hovered directly over the silo. The lights from the object were so bright that some people back at the main base thought that there had been a missile launch. But there was no launch that night."

I asked Clark to speculate about how the report of the sighting had been communicated to his squadron-mates. He replied, "I don't know bow the word reached them. The guys did not have direct radio contact with the silos. No way. And, as far as I recall, none of them had any contact with the Air Police. I just do not know how they became aware of the report, or how the word reached the Dayroom. All I know is when we walked in, the guys were talking excitedly about the UFO, and asked us if we had seen anything."

Clark continued, "The report that came in was that the UFO was about the size of a two-engine plane. No word on its color from the others, but they did describe the intense bright lights. It was silent. It was not a helicopter. They said it approached and came to a stop directly over the silo, about 50- to a 100-feet above it. It held that position for a short period of time. Nothing was said about how it left—at least I do not recall anything about it speeding away or anything. I'm sure fighters were not scrambled. We would have seen or heard them approach. We also did survey work at Edwards [AFB], along the runways, and were very familiar with the ear-bursting noises of F-4s and other fighters on after-burner takeoffs."

He continued, "As I said, although we were a few miles north of the other silo, we did not see anything nor did we hear anything. Of course, we were concentrating on Polaris and the survey quad to the north, and did not pay attention to our south side. The only thing we observed en route back to the base was that the other silo was lit up, with the standard security lights, and

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there were three or four Air Police vehicles there. Although there was much excitement in the Dayroom when we arrived, the next day it was as if nothing had happened. There was no further talk of the event. I never even heard any rumors after that night. That amazed me then and now—that the guys could be so excited and talking about how the authorities thought it had been a launch—only to have the subject completely dropped the next morning. It was as if a switch had been turned off."

I asked Clark if he recalled any rumors at the base, from individuals outside his squadron, of the missile in question being functionally- compromised after the sighting. He replied, "Unfortunately, I cannot be of any help regarding that missile's launch schedule—if it was delayed, if it was altered in any way. I, and the others in my detachment, were simply not in those loops."

At this point, Clark divulged something else: "While that was the most spectacular event [that I knew of] at Vandenberg, there were other unusual events that I personally observed, on several occasions, out on the north end of the base. Many times, while taking the measurements on Polaris—or while setting-up our instrument, or right afterward—we would look up at the heavens and see satellites traversing across the sky. These were always in a north-south orbit. It was easy to tell a satellite because as they spun, they alternated from dark to lit."

He continued, "However, on many occasions, I personally saw something that appeared to be a satellite traversing southbound, but it would instantly stop and then track northbound along the same path. Satellites do not do that. Airplanes do not do that. I personally witnessed this phenomenon many times. I never heard an explanation of what those [objects] could be. All these years later, I do not know why we did not raise the question about those apparent satellites tracking south, then immediately switching and tracking back north along the same route. We were just a bunch of dumb young guys seemingly unaware of what was going on under our nose—or over our heads."

The flurry of UFO activity at nuclear missile sites in mid-1960s presumably raised the level of anxiety at SAC Headquarters and the Pentagon to near the breaking point. But the drama was only beginning, and some of

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the most spectacular incidents were still waiting in the wings.

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11. Taking Down Echo and Oscar

"… no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security..."

—The U.S. Air Force, stating one of its reasons for terminating Project Blue Book

In March 1967, two spectacular events occurred outside Malmstrom AFB, Montana, which have become the best known ICBM-related UFO incidents on record. According to at least six former or retired U.S. Air Force officers, UFOs apparently disrupted the functioning of all 10 Minuteman I missiles at Echo Flight, on March 16th, and essentially repeated the feat at Oscar Flight —probably on March 24th—when at least six to eight missiles were simultaneously shut down.

These large-scale disruptions, each lasting a day or more, understandably resulted in great concern, extending from the local air force commanders to the highest levels of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). Not only had a significant number of our nuclear missiles been temporarily compromised, but the reported UFO involvement in the disruptions was an extremely ominous sign, at least from the military's point-of-view. In short, the two closely-spaced incidents had impacted U.S. national security in the most fundamental manner.

Not that any of this was publicly acknowledged by the Air Force. Decades later, in response to a Freedom of Information request submitted by Klotz, SAC did declassify a hundred or so pages of the 341st Strategic Missile Wing's unit history, which referenced the Echo Flight missile malfunctions. However, the official history claimed that although UFOs had been reported in the area at the time of the shutdowns, those reports bad later proved to be erroneous.

Moreover, the Air Force remains entirely silent on the Oscar Flight shutdown, which apparently occurred a few days later. Officially, it never happened. Regardless, both of the missile launch officers who were involved in the incident have now offered on-the-record testimony to the contrary.

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One of them, former U.S. Air Force Captain Robert Salas, had been on duty when a UFO hovered at low altitude above the gate of the Oscar Launch Control Facility. Seconds later, the flight's missiles began malfunctioning. Over the last decade, Salas—working with veteran UFO researcher Jim Klotz—has extensively investigated the incident. In addition to tracking down potential witnesses, Klotz has filed numerous Freedom of Information requests in an attempt to force the declassification of pertinent documents. Their revealing summary of the events of March 1967, titled "The Malmstrom AFB UFO/Missile Incident", was published online in 1996.[1] More recently, Salas and Klotz have also written a thorough and persuasive book, *Faded Giant*, which expands upon their earlier report.[2] In March 1997—exactly 30 years after the two incidents—Salas, Klotz, and retired USAF Colonel Don Crawford—who had arrived at Echo Flight shortly after the shutdowns there—described their experiences during an episode of the television program *Sightings*, which aired on the Sci-Fi Channel. Declining anonymity, the pair became the first former nuclear missile launch officers to openly discuss the reality of ICBM- related UFO incidents for a national viewing audience.

After Salas attended my lecture at the University of Washington, in 1998, I began an extensive correspondence with him, which continues to the present. Over time, we have become friends, and he has provided me with additional information about his intriguing encounter at Malmstrom.

On that night in 1967, then-1st Lieutenant Salas had been the Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC) on alert at the Oscar Flight Launch Control Facility (LCF). Suddenly, he received an urgent call from the site's Flight Security Controller, informing him that several security guards were reporting strange lights maneuvering in the sky near the LCF. At the time, Salas was sixty feet underground in the Launch Control Capsule (LCC) and could not, therefore, observe the lights himself. Although puzzled, he was at first relatively unconcerned.

In his online article, Salas wrote,

... I did not take this report seriously and directed him to report back if anything more significant happened. At the time, I believed this first call to be

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a joke. Still, that sort of behavior was definitely out of character for air security policemen whose communications with us were usually very professional.

A few minutes later, the Flight Security Controller called a second time, obviously frightened and shouting into phone.

'Sir, there's one hovering outside the front gate!'

'One what?'

'A UFO! It's just [hovering] there. We're all looking at it. What do you want us to do?'

'What? What does it look like?'

'I can't really describe it. It's glowing red. What are we supposed to do?'

'Make sure the site is secure and I'll phone the Command Post.'

'Sir, I have to go now, one of the guys just got injured.'

Before I could ask about the injury, he was off the line. I immediately went over to my commander, Lt. Fred Meiwald, who was on a scheduled sleep period. I woke him and began to brief him about the phone calls and what was going on topside. In the middle of this conversation, we both heard the first alarm klaxon resound through the confined space of the capsule, and both [of us] immediately looked over at the panel of annunciator lights at the Commander's station. A 'No-Go' light and two red security lights were lit, indicating problems at one of our missile sites. Fred jumped up to query the system to determine the cause of the problem. Before he could do so, another

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alarm went off at another site, then another and another simultaneously. Within the next few seconds, we had lost six to eight missiles to a 'No-Go' (inoperable) condition.

After reporting this incident to the Command Post, I phoned my security guard. He said that the man who had approached the UFO had not been injured seriously but was being evacuated by helicopter to the base. Once topside, I spoke directly with the security guard about the UFOs. He added that the UFO had a red glow and appeared to be saucer-shaped. He repeated that it had been immediately outside the front gate, hovering silently. [Salas was also informed that the UFO had left the area at high velocity.]

We sent a security patrol to check our [launch facilities] after the shutdown, and they reported sighting another UFO during that patrol. They also lost radio contact with our site immediately after reporting the UFO...[3]

Salas has stated that it was "very rare" for even a single Minuteman missile to malfunction. The fact that so many of them had suddenly switched to a No-Go status utterly stunned the two launch officers. "We couldn't believe it," said Salas, "As I recall, most of the failures were related to the guidance and control system." A short time later, the launch crew was informed that a maintenance team was being sent to Oscar Flight to inspect and restart the missiles. Salas believes it was a day or more before all of the ICBMs were brought back on line.

Upon returning to Malmstrom AFB by helicopter, Salas and Meiwald were ordered to report to their squadron commanders office. Salas told me, "I recall there was 'buzz' about the UFO sightings in the debriefing room after we landed." With the commander was an agent from the bases Office of Special Investigations (OSI), who first interrogated the men and then asked them to sign non-disclosure agreements—telling them that the incident was highly-classified and not to be discussed with anyone, even amongst themselves. The OSI agent also confiscated the launch officer.' alert duty logs.

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Salas once told me, “From all we have heard from the maintenance people we have interviewed, the rumors and comments [about UFO activity at Malmstrom] were rampant. I personally received a call from an NCO after the Oscar shutdowns, practically begging me to come talk to him and others about the incident. Believe me, it was all over the base and some of the troops were flat scared.”

In their co-authored article, Salas and researcher Jim Klotz primarily discuss the missile shutdown incident at Echo Flight. Salas says that when his launch commander, Fred Meiwald, called the Missile Command Post to report the UFO sighting and the shutdowns at Oscar, he was informed that, “It also happened at another flight.”

Unfortunately, with the passage of decades, Salas had forgotten the other missile flights designation, as well as the flight he was at, the night (,is missiles shut down. After Meiwald was located and interviewed, in 2000, the latter was determined to be Oscar Flight. As for the earlier shutdown, Klotz eventually secured, via the FOIA, extracts from “three or four” quarterly reports specifically related to missile shutdowns, drawn from the “wing history” of the 341st Strategic Missile Wing. The declassified extracts explicitly referenced a full-flight, 10-missile shutdown at Echo Flight, which had occurred on March 16, 1967—but then quickly disavowed any UFO-involvement in it. As Klotz and Salas now reconstruct the situation, Echo Flight was presumably the other flight mentioned to Meiwald when he called the Command Post, shortly after Oscar’s missiles failed.

Regarding the supposed non-involvement of UFOs in the Echo Flight incident, Klotz eventually located and interviewed the wing historian, David Gamble, who had actually written the lengthy document. Gamble told Klotz that while compiling material for the history, he had in fact learned of reports of UFO activity within Malmstrom’s missile field. However, when he inquired about those reports, Gamble said he had received “no cooperation” from those in-the-know and, furthermore, stated that written changes regarding “the UFO aspect of the missile shutdown incident” had later been made by his superiors. Consequently, official version of the wing history states, “Rumors of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) around the area of Echo Flight during the time of the fault were disproven.” Klotz notes that the finding was ostensibly based on an engineering report but that the report was

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never made available to him.[4]

Despite this official disavowal, several former U.S. Air Force personnel—missile launch officers and maintenance personnel—now state that UFOs had been sighted in the vicinity of the flight at the time of the ICBM malfunctions.

One of those launch officers, retired Colonel Don Crawford, arrived for alert duty at the Echo LCF some hours after the malfunctions occurred. The missile crew he relieved, composed of Captain Eric Carlson and 1st Lieutenant Walt Figel, informed him about the UFO sightings and subsequent shutdowns. Figel told Crawford that a number of unusual calls had come in to the LCF during the early morning hours, sometime before dawn. Missile maintenance teams working at two of the flight's widely-separated launch facilities reported seeing strange aerial lights maneuvering near their positions. These sightings were quickly confirmed by a mobile Security Alert Team patrolling the missile field.

Not long thereafter, at about 8:30 a.m., as Figel and his commander were performing routine alert-status checks in the LCF, Echo Flight's missiles suddenly began dropping off-line, one after the other. Within seconds, they were all inoperable, due to malfunctions in the missiles' guidance and control—G&C—systems. (Bob Salas believes that the failures at Oscar Flight were also the result of G&C issues.)

Immediately after the malfunctions at Echo, the launch officers ordered two separate Security Alert Teams to drive to each of the launch facilities where the UFOs had been sighted. By the time they arrived, the objects had departed. Nevertheless, the maintenance and security personnel at each site reported seeing the UFOs hovering near the missile silos.

According to Colonel Crawford, as he relieved Echo Flight's missile crew, he noticed that both officers were visibly shaken by their experience. He further recalls that the maintenance teams worked all day and into the night to bring the flight's missiles back to alert status.

The potential consequences of these mysterious malfunctions were enormous. If the President of the United States had ordered a nuclear strike against America's adversaries on March 16, 1967, the missiles of Echo Flight would have remained in their underground launch facilities. The

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unanticipated and unexplained full-flight shutdown meant that ten major enemy targets were temporarily exempt from destruction.

Following the Echo incident, the Air Force conducted an extensive investigation. Engineers from the Boeing Company—which had designed the Minuteman ICBM—investigated several possible causes, including weather conditions and commercial power surges, but ruled out all of them. However, they were able to duplicate the exact faults a high percentage of the time by directly injecting a certain signal, a "noise", into the logic coupler. Nevertheless, they were unable to determine the source of such a signal.[5]

Klotz summarizes the technical findings: It appears that an unidentified 'noise' somehow induced into the inter-site cable system could have, and probably did, propagate throughout the system affecting multiple LFs, causing the No-Go conditions. A No-Go condition is just that, a condition, not a cause. It is the *source* of this noise and how it got into the shielded, deeply buried cable system that was and is the mystery."[6]

As if the incidents at Echo and Oscar Flights were not enough, other UFO sightings occurred near Malmstrom AFB around the same time. James Ortyl, who was an Air Policeman at Malmstrom, assigned to the 341st Combat Support Group, told me,

I was an Airman 2nd Class at the time. We were working a day-shift at Kilo Flight in March of 1967. I remember the sighting was in March because it occurred near my birthday, which is March 17th. It was mid-morning and three or four Air Policemen were gathered in the launch control facility dispatch office. Airman Robert Pounders and I were facing the windows looking out to the yard and parking lot. The others were facing us. As we were conversing, I witnessed a shimmering, reddish-orange object clear the main gate and in a sweeping motion pass quickly and silently pass by the windows. It seemed to be within 30 yards of the building. Stunned, I looked at Pounders and asked, 'Did you see that?!' He acknowledged that he had.

Since we had not been alerted of anything unusual going on and there were no rumors floating around, we didn't quite know what to make of it at the time of the sighting. To this day, I regret not having run outside the building

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to see if the object still could have been seen. I remembered that it had somewhat of an aura around it. It was very difficult to make out the shape of the object because it was shimmering and seemed aglow. I don't even know if the sighting was reported to anyone. At the time, immediately after the sighting, we would have been the Security Alert Team dispatched to any Kilo Launch Facility [if the UFO had approached one of them]. But I did not hear of any radio chatter or rumors of anyone being dispatched. No one from the Air Force has ever spoken to me about it.

Another UFO sighting near Malmstrom AFB occurred on the evening of March 24, 1967, and was later covered by the *Great Falls Tribune*. A trucker named Ken Williams, driving on U.S. Route 87, near the town of Belt, reported seeing a "dome-shaped object emitting a bright light" which landed in a deep ravine next to the highway. He pulled over and got out of his truck to try to see the object more clearly. As he approached it on foot, the mysterious craft silently ascended, moved further away, and landed again. A declassified Air Force telex relating to this sighting confirms that deputies from the Cascade County Sheriff's Office had notified Malmstrom AFB about the incident. As we will see shortly, one former U.S. Air Force officer has recently gone on-the-record regarding his personal knowledge of the event.

While the incident near Belt was the best documented UFO sighting near Malmstrom AFB, in March 1967, it appears that UFO activity at the bases ICBM sites occurred again the following month. Researcher Raymond Fowler has reported that "a civilian employee at Malmstrom told me a bright, round, white object circled [one] missile silo for prolonged periods on April 10 and 11, 1967. Apparently its altitude was beyond the operational capabilities of Air Force interceptors. Personnel who had sighted the strange object were told that it was a highly-secret government test vehicle and not to be discussed. The local radio station was told to keep quiet about it." 8 At the time, Fowler was a member of the Minuteman Missile Project at Sylvania Corporation, one of the missile system's civilian contractors. As such, he was in direct contact with Sylvania personnel, and others, who were on assignment at Malmstrom.

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As noted earlier, in September 2002, the Association of Air Force Missileers published a brief article of mine in its newsletter, in which I mentioned the 1967 Malmstrom incidents. Shortly thereafter, a retired Minuteman launch officer—whom I will not identify—wrote to me and questioned the truthfulness of Salas' account. I forwarded that letter to Salas, who responded to his critic this way:

With regards to the Echo UFO encounters, I have spoken with the DMCCC, Walt Figel (Lt. Col. Retired.) about this incident and he related to me that his missiles did in fact go down precisely at the time UFOs were being reported by the maintenance crew at one of his sites. There are details lacking in our report, not because we are avoiding including them, but because we have had a difficult time getting all the facts from Air Force. The incident was classified until we unclassified it through a FOIA request. In addition, [the technical] details of the Echo incident were suppressed by the Air Force. I know this because the individual who headed up the Boeing/ Ogden team that investigated the Echo incident told me the Air Force directed him, through his supervisor, not to write a final report on the incident.

With regards to the Oscar UFO encounters, I have verified the salient points of what I reported with my commander in the capsule, Fred Meiwald (Col. Retired.). Our memories of what happened that morning are the same. It was Col. Meiwald who spoke with one of our SAT team members via a VHF phone patch when they reported sighting a UFO at one of our LFs. Although, you are correct about not having direct VHF COMM in the capsule, we were able to make a patch for VHF communications with our SAT teams from time to time. [Salas later told me, "We communicated with the guards on patrol sometimes by phoning our principle security NCO who would contact the patrol via VHF."] At any rate, I can't say why the Air Force did not report the Oscar UFO incident and why we have not been able to locate documents specifically related to the incident, but I and Col. Meiwald do say that it did happen. I have stated so in front of a roomful of reporters at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., to U.S. Congressmen and Senators, and to anyone who will listen with an open mind. I sense you are not one of those

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individuals…

This skeptic was not the first to question Salas' disclosures and he will certainly not be the last. However, as more and more former and retired military eyewitnesses come forward to reveal their own UFO encounters at other nuclear missile sites, such widespread disbelief will eventually fade away, even though that outcome may be decades from now.

Salas has made clear, on a number of occasions, that he believes that those responsible for shutting down his missiles are extraterrestrial beings who are attempting to warn humanity about the dangers of nuclear weapons. As recently as December 2007, responding to another skeptic, he wrote,

[To] help you understand my position on the ET Hypothesis, it is my thoughtful opinion, after years and years of thinking and innumerable discussions about my own experience and others that I have studied and evaluated, that the ET hypothesis is the most reasonable explanation for the phenomenon.

This is not my belief... My position is also not one which I am intending to prove. As you may know, I am a math teacher and a student of math. Math is a structure based on reason and also promotes reasoning skill. The techniques of mathematical proof vary and are written to convince at a particular level of (mathematical) understanding. Although there are enough 'data points' to convince me that the ET hypothesis is the most rational explanation. It would be impossible to generally prove the ET hypotheses at this point…

Finally, I don't think you fully accept the reality of my incident when you state that one cannot rule out a terrestrial origin for what happened. Do you really think some earthly intelligence designed and built an object that could do what the objects did in my case? If you do, I would like to hear your explanation of how that could have occurred.

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In one email to Salas, I told him that I admired the courage he displayed in standing up to the Powers That Be. He responded, “The Powers That Be. That’s what it’s all about for me. Power of this magnitude should not be in the hands of a few arrogant SOBs who think they have all the answers regarding our visitors. It just gets my hackles up.” In another email, Salas told me, “Thank God you are still [investigating] this. Again, I want to thank you for your continuing efforts. As you know, there was a big mix of secrecy, emotion, clouded memories, fear and astonishment surrounding all of this so, as with anything of a historical nature, we may never know the precise truth of specific events. But I hope you will emphasize in your book that the essential truth is clear.”

Picking Up the Pieces

In 1967, Staff Sgt. Louis D. Kenneweg was assigned to the 341st Missile Maintenance Squadron (MIMS) at Malmstrom AFB, Montana His duties at the MIMS hangar included issuing Technical Order kit' (T.O.s) to other members of his squadron. As Kenneweg explained' “Each of the repair teams would be required to take T.O.s in the truck with them. The kit included books or manuals that would contain technical information that the technicians could look up rather than rely on memory. There was also a check list in plastic sleeves, kind of like a pre-flight checklist for a pilot, that they would use before removing the warhead from the missile.”

One night, around 11:45 p.m. Kenneweg was driving to work when he noticed something unusual in the sky. “As I traveled down one of the roads parallel to the flight line,” he said, “I saw something that I first thought was a private planes lights, blinking. As I watched it get closer, I realized that it wasn’t blinking at all, but zigzagging. First here, then there, traveling too fast for a plane. Then looming over the flight line. I got up late, and I knew that I had little time, but I stopped anyway. I opened the car door, got out, and focused on the lights. I watched it as long as I could, without being late to work. I remember saying to myself that this pilot was going to be in a lot of trouble, coming across the runway, or at least across the Air Force Base

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property. I don't remember it traveling that close to me, but I do remember the image of it disappearing in a low southerly trajectory over the hangar. Of course it was much farther away than it appeared. At that point, it wasn't 'blinking' anymore but had more of a glow. It appeared as a bright light the size of the moon, on a cloudy night, although I don't remember it being cloudy."

Upon arriving at the MIMS hangar, Kenneweg was confronted by a scene of high activity. "As I entered the hangar I noticed that there were numerous trucks being loaded," he said, "many more than I had ever seen all at the same time." Still puzzled about the strange, zigzagging light, Kenneweg walked toward the Air Police office, where APs were routinely assigned to accompany the maintenance teams into the missile fields, guarding their trucks and the silos once they opened the gates. When he arrived, he noticed an unusual level of activity there as well. Kenneweg asked the Air Police sergeant whether the base had any helicopters up. The sergeant replied that the helicopters didn't have radar and didn't fly at night. Said Kenneweg, "I'm not sure that he knew the reason for my question, I didn't see it in his eyes, so I left, not wanting to get into a discussion about it."

He continued, "Back at the office, I issued almost all of the [T.O.] kits on the shelf. I remember saying to myself, 'I'm running out of kits, this is a busy night.' Now, I didn't check the sign-out sheet to see how many kits had been checked out before my shift, but while I was on duty, I did recall that they were almost all checked out. As I count them off in my head today, and try to see them on the shelf, we had a wall with 3 shelves that would hold 25 or so." Clearly, a lot of missiles were either undergoing routine maintenance, or had gone off Strategic Alert, or both, all at the same time.

When the maintenance teams returned to the MIMS hangar—Kenneweg first thought that it had been some three hours later, but upon reflection, now believes that it was more than 24 hours later, during his next shift—one of the technicians hinted that something out of the ordinary had taken place in the missile field. "One of the guys mentioned to me that some very weird things were going on that night," said Kenneweg, "It takes two guys to carry the T.O. kit, and there were other guys behind him, waiting in line to get checked in, and they were all nodding their heads in agreement. But this guy said that he couldn't talk about it right then. He said he would tell me all about it back

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at the barracks. Well, like I have said before, I was busy working [a second job] at the Red Lion Supper Club and didn't really have that serious sit-down conversation with that particular airman. But the barracks was buzzing. Stories about how when they got to the [missile silos] and found no damage, and how all the batteries were dead. I also heard a story that [the UFOs] were seen on radar, then they were gone."

He continued, "Our missile sites each had a tertiary power system. The main power source was delivered by Montana Power. Telephone poles, transformers and wire. The second system was the diesel generators, and the third was the battery backup within the silo itself. Numerous reports came back saying that they had found no damage to the fences, wires, transformers, microwave intrusion system, locks on the three-loot- thick concrete blast doors, or to the batteries. So, no evidence of damage from intruders or animals, lightning or fire. Just three sources of power vanished and the batteries were dead."

During one conversation, Kenneweg told me he recalled that the maintenance teams were being dispatched to Echo Flight that night. However, in a later conversation, he was less certain about their destination. Regardless, Kenneweg believes that the incident was not isolated. 'As I recall," he said, "there were other nights where the guys would come back and look a little shaken, all within that same time-period."

It appears that Louis Kenneweg's recollections may have been corroborated by Gerald Koertner, who was an Airman 3rd Class at the time, assigned to the 34lst Missile Maintenance Squadron at Malmstrom Koertner worked as an electrician and was a member of the Personnel Access System Maintenance (PASM) team, which maintained the integrity of the two vault-type doors protecting each of Malmstrom's Minuteman I missiles in its underground launch facility, or silo. According to Koertner, 0n one occasion, he had been present at the MIMS hanger when word came in that an entire missile flight had dropped off alert status.

While I can not be certain that Kenneweg and Koertner are describing the same incident—and not two very similar incidents occurring on different dates—their accounts nevertheless tally well. When I asked Koertner how he had estimated the time-frame of his experience, he replied, "I had gotten to

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Malmstrom in October of ‘66 and the reason I remember spring of ‘67 [for the incident] is because it was close to my birthday, which is April 5th. I had just bought a 1965 Corvair in mid-March. I am one of those people who remember things by associating [them] with something else. I remember driving my car to work that night.”

If this recollection is indeed accurate, one night in the spring of 1967, Koertner was present at the MIMS hanger when the level of activity suddenly skyrocketed. Decades later, he told me,

I was on hanger detail, where you get stuck on a clean-up crew for a week, you know, cleaning up offices after hours and stuff like that. There was a group of offices inside the hanger. The night the one missile flight went out, I remember all hell breaking loose! There were guys running wild and the tension in the hanger was very high. Job Control was a very busy place and many trucks were being dispatched to the [missile] field, including the Electro-Mechanical and Targeting Teams. I didn’t have to go out to the field unless one of those teams was unable to access a missile silo, so I wasn’t out there that night.

Anyway, everything just went wild but [the members of the various teams] didn’t share anything with me. Everything I learned about the incident I learned later on, either at work or back at the barracks.” I asked Koertner what the team members were saying to each other. He said, “I don’t think any of the guys really knew what was going on. All they knew was that missiles were dropping out of green [going off alert status]. I later heard that an entire flight had gone down in a manner of minutes. I heard that Mike, Oscar, and November [Flights] were all having the problems.

In an effort to clarify this statement, I asked Koertner, “Do you mean that some missiles from each flight went down, but not an entire flight?” Koertner replied, “If I recall correctly, it was Oscar that went down [completely] but the other two were having problems too.”

I asked Koertner if there had been any indication that UFOs were involved.

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He replied, “I don’t remember hearing anything like that that night. I heard something like that a day or two later, through the grapevine. What I do remember was hearing that one of the sky cops [Air Policemen) got hurt. I heard he had sort of been blown back, uh, knocked off his feet, by the UFO hovering over the LCF. I heard he was a black guy, but that’s about all I can tell you.”

I asked Koertner if there had been other occasions when the level of activity at the MIMS hanger was as high. He replied, “Not while f was there.” I asked if he had heard about other full-flight missile shutdowns and he replied, “Not that I recall.”

Although the accounts provided by Gerald Koertner and Louis Kenneweg are certainly important, other reports from former members of the missile maintenance and targeting reams, who were actually out in the field restarting the missiles, are far more intriguing. Regarding the full-flight missile shutdown at Echo Flight, on March 16, 1967, N. Henry “Hank” Barlow told me,

I arrived at Malmstrom in October 1966 and left in November 1967. I was on Electro-Mechanical Team 24 at the time [the Echo Flight shutdown] happened. We had to go out to Mike-1 for about four or five days. We had to stay out there and cover the sites. The day we were supposed to return [to base,] my team chief called Job Control to see if we could come in because it was really starting to snow. It was really miserable out, windy and all. Job Control said, ‘Yeah, come on in, there’s nothing going on, everything seems okay.’ So we packed up and started back to the base.

Then Job Control called us on the radio and said, ‘Hey, we’ve got a problem here, part of Echo Flight has shut down, so we want you to go to the nearest site.’ I think that was Echo-6, but I’m not sure. Anyway, somewhere around that area. We checked VRSA and there was nothing on it. [That] was a unit in each launch facility, with something like 19 or 20 channels on it. [Actually, VRSA or Voice Reporting Signal Assembly had 23 channels, one for each problem area.] If the missile went down for any reason, or if there was some other problem, Job Control back at Malmstrom would know about it, know

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what is was, from the kind of signal it sent. But when we got to the site, there was nothing on [VRSA] to indicate the reason for the missile shutting down. That in itself was unusual. I had never seen that before.

So Job Control said, do a start-up, which takes about four hours. After you initiate the startup, you can back out of there and leave because its automatic after a certain point. Usually, if there was nothing else going on, we would stay at the site to make sure everything was working fine. But that night, Job Control said go to the next site, whatever that was. So we did that, and [restarted] three or four missiles before going back to [Echo-I]. Of all ten missiles that went down, only one wouldn't come back up, but that was due to something that was going to [fail] anyway, like a Logic Coupler Drawer, or something like that. But none of the missiles had anything on VRSA.

[When we got back to Echo-1] we heard what happened. At Echo-2, there was a team in there earlier that afternoon that could not get the security [telemetry] to set-up, through the parabolic antenna or the soft support building or something like that. So, they put an Air Police team out there, in a camper, two guys. Anyway, one of the guys went out to take a leak, and he noticed that it wasn't snowing over top of his head. The perimeter lights were on and he could see the snow coming down all around him so he looked up and saw a ring of lights right over top of him. He was scared stiff, so he went back to the camper and woke up his team partner.

When this other guy came out, he had a camera with him, which they weren't suppose to have, but guys would do stuff like that. By then this thing had moved off the perimeter fence and he took pictures of it. [When the security team was debriefed back at the base,] the Air Force confiscated the camera and film. I was told all of this back at Echo-1. We had passed our 'timelines' because we had worked 16 hours, or something like that, and could not go back to the base so we had to go back to Echo. [During that era, maintenance teams were left out in the field for four to five days, working a maximum of 16 hours per day—the timeline. If a team got close to reaching that limit, it was sent to the nearest Launch Control Facility for Remain Over

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Night, or RON status.] When we got back there, there was brass all over the place. They were from Offutt AFB—SAC Headquarters—they had brought them in. There were just a lot of high-ranking officers there.

I asked Barlow who had told him about the incident involving the Camper Alert Team. He responded, "I don't remember. I don't know if it was one of the security guys or someone else. I was so tired when we got back to Echo 1—we had worked long hours, we had been out almost a week by that time and we were just pooped. All I remember is that there were lots of people there and there was no place to lie down. But we were told that it was a UFO shutdown—that UFOs had been responsible—and that's why all those guys were there."

I asked Barlow if he had been surprised or shocked or skeptical when he was informed that UFOs had shutdown the missiles. He replied,

Oh no! On many other occasions, we were out at the sites when Job Control called and told us that, you know, there are reports of UFOs in the area, so keep your eyes open. That happened many, many times. And I saw them! I would see a light in the sky and it would make a right- angle turn. Or it would make two different right-angle turns, one after the other. I saw that more than once. They were much faster than a helicopter and we certainly knew that aircraft [couldn't] do that.

I once saw a light come straight down, hover at maybe 1000-feet, and then shoot straight off [horizontally] and out of sight. It was crazy! Job Control always called us first, before we saw anything. They would call and say, you know, heads-up. Then, most of the time, we would see something a little while later. So, they were getting reports from somewhere, and maybe they had [the UFOs] on radar, but I don't know for sure. Sometimes, when the call came in, we were down in the missile [silo] and we would talk to the guard topside about what he was seeing. I remember one time, the guard was just a nervous wreck. Job Control had called and said UFOs were sighted in the area. Then, I'm not sure, but I think he saw some lights himself. But anyway, he was just scared out of his wits. He wanted to come down in the silo with us. But the

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guards weren't allowed to do that.

One time, [probably during the summer of 1967,] we were at one of the Bravo sites when we got a call from Job Control saying that there were UFO sightings in our area. Then, a short time later, we saw a green light come straight down out of the sky and land on this hill. Then two lights separated from it, straight out to each side. We were sitting in the pick up truck, eating our box lunches, when we saw this, along with another team we were training, plus the guard. We reported it to Job Control. They told us to close up the site and go check that out. We told them that we didn't think we were qualified to do that! This was around 4 a.m. When it got light, we were amazed how far away the hill was, where this thing had landed. It was far, far away. We thought it was much closer, so the light was really bright.

I asked Barlow if he had later been debriefed about the incident at Echo Flight. He said, "No, never! It was almost kind of a joke, we would all laugh about it. Now, it wasn't a joke [with all the missiles down] but it was a joke because nobody would believe it if you told them about it."

I asked Barlow if he had heard about the Oscar Flight missiles shutting down around the same time as the Echo Flight shutdowns. He said "No, I never knew about that… I wasn't qualified to work there."

Although Barlow was not involved with the missile restarts at Oscar Flight, another individual has informed me of his participation in the aftermath of that incident. Robert C. Jamison, a former USAF officer, has also gone on-the-record about the 1967 missile shutdowns at Malmstrom AFB. At that time, 1st Lieutenant Jamison was a Minuteman Combat Targeting Team Commander, assigned to the 341st Missile Maintenance Squadron. As such, Jamison's responsibilities involved the programming of the missiles' guidance systems so, in time of war, their nuclear warheads would accurately hit their targets in the Soviet Union.

I interviewed Jamison in 1992 and again in 2004. As is true when investigating other UFO incidents that occurred long ago, I discovered that many of the details relating to Jamison's experience had been lost to time. Nevertheless, the significance of his testimony can not be understated.

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Jamison seemingly substantiates various statements provided by former Minuteman missile launch officers Bob Salas and Fred Meiwald, regarding the previously discussed incident at Oscar Flight. However, if he is indeed referring to the same event, Jamison's statements place the incident eight days later than the estimated date of March 16, 1967 first provided by former launch officer Robert Salas and researcher Jim Klotz. Furthermore, Jamison states that he was directly involved in another, hitherto unknown UFO-related, multiple missile shutdown incident, possibly at India Flight, which occurred approximately two weeks after the Oscar Flight event. This disclosure seems to suggest that large-scale ICBM shutdown events at Malmstrom, in the spring of 1967, were more widespread than previously thought.

Generally corroborating statements made by Electro-Mechanical Team member Hank Barlow, Jamison provides unambiguous testimony to the effect that commanders at Malmstrom's 341st Missile Maintenance Squadron had been fully aware of UFO-involvement in the missile shutdowns—at the time they occurred—and had taken active measures to enhance the safety of the Combat Targeting Teams dispatched to restart the stricken ICBMs. This disclosure confirms in part the statements of former EMT team member Hank Barlow and completely contradicts the official position of the U.S. Air Force, which continues to deny the existence of any credible information regarding UFO-involvement in the missile malfunctions at the base.

Nevertheless, late one evening in March 1967, Jamison was relaxing at home when he received an urgent telephone call from the missile maintenance hanger. In two separate interviews, combined here, Jamison told me, "One of my jobs as a missile targeting officer was to go out and re-start [missile] sites that had shut-down for various reasons. We were called that particular night because a lot of sites were shut-down. The Job Control office called me at home at, uh, probably 10, 11, 12 o'clock at night. It might have been even later than that. Oscar was the flight that went down. That's the one our team responded to." Jamison added chat he had been on scheduled alert stand-by and, after receiving the call to report, got down to the MIMS Operations Center—the hangar—probably within ten minutes.

Upon arriving there, but even before reporting to the Job Control office, Jamison overheard other targeting team personnel discussing rumors of a

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UFO connection with the problem at hand. Supposedly, the ten missiles comprising Oscar Flight had gone off alert status—malfunctioned—just after a UFO had been reported in the vicinity of their Launch Control Facility. Once Jamison arrived at Job Control, a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) confirmed those reports, telling Jamison that Air Police guards at the stricken flight had indeed reported a UFO just prior to the missiles malfunctioning.

Startled by these disclosures—which were still unofficial—Jamison expected to be ordered to the missile field immediately. He was surprised to learn that all of the targeting teams had been directed to remain at the hanger, as a precaution, until all UFO reports from the field had ceased. At that point, however, there was still no official confirmation of the reason for the delay. Jamison estimated that the teams waited 2-3 hours before being given the go-ahead to proceed to Oscar Flight.

While waiting, Jamison walked to a temporary command post which had been set up in the hanger. There he overhead another squadron member talking on a two-way radio about a second UFO which had apparently landed in a deep ravine, not far from the base. Later that night, as events unfolded, Jamison and his team traveled past the alleged landing site and, as they did so, he observed a small group of Air Force vehicles positioned just off the road, at the top of the ravine.

With this particular revelation, Jamison seems to be providing a new, behind-the-scenes perspective on the already well-documented UFO sighting at Belt, Montana, which occurred on March 24, 1967. If this is the case, it appears that Oscar Flight went down on that date, not eight days earlier, as previously believed.

Jamison said, after much delay, the assembled targeting teams finally received a rather remarkable briefing prior to departing the command Post. At its conclusion, there was an official disclosure: “They then told us what was happening,” he recalled, “There had been some UFO activity that had been messing things up.”

This admission, as portrayed by Jamison, implies that the persons briefing the Combat Targeting Teams either knew, or at least strongly suspected, that one or more UFOs had been involved in the missile shutdowns. The importance of this revelation is obvious. It is one thing to hear

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unsubstantiated rumors about UFO-involvement in the missile shutdowns from one's peers, as Jamison had upon arriving at the hanger, but to receive official verification of those rumors is quite another.

Moreover, according to Jamison, specific instructions had been given to the teams. "They briefed us on what to do," he said, "If we saw a UFO while on the road, [we were to] report it. If we were at the site, [and saw a UFO] we were supposed to get into the silo and close the personnel hatch."

In other words, those conducting the briefing were apparently convinced of a UFO-connection with the missile malfunctions, and had formulated a plan of action which would provide intelligence about any additional sightings and, furthermore, enhance the safety of the dispatched targeting teams as they worked to restore the missiles to operational status.

Jamison continued, "So we went out to the site, not only us, but the other teams were out there doing the same work. But I never saw [a UFO]." Jamison said that while it had been dark when he left the maintenance hangar, it was already getting light when he arrived at the missile field. His team worked on two or three of the missiles while the other teams restored the remainder of the flight. He said that 2-3 hours were required, per missile, to restart them. Therefore, it was mid-afternoon before his team finished its work, and late afternoon before it got back to Malmstrom.

Upon arriving at the hangar, all of the teams were debriefed. Despite the extraordinary nature of the event, Jamison doesn't recall being told to keep quiet about it. As unusual as it may seem, UFOs were apparently not mentioned.

When Jamison told me this, I said that it seemed to me that such an event would be considered highly-classified and that those involved in it would have been warned not to discuss it. If the team members had not been required to sign a non-disclosure statement, there surely would have been a stern verbal admonishment to those assembled. Jamison responded. "No, I don't remember that. We were perplexed alright, but I don't recall being sworn to secrecy, or anything like that. I told my wife all about it after I got home!"

This certainly seems curious, given the highly-sensitive nature of the incident and its relevance to national security. Nevertheless, Jamison insisted

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that he had no recollection of signing a non-disclosure statement, 0r being subjected to a lecture on the importance of maintaining secrecy. However, he did say that after the incident, for a period of approximately two weeks, the Combat Targeting Teams received the same "special UFO briefing" prior to each dispatch, during which they were again instructed to report any UFO sightings to the Missile Command Post, and to undertake self-defense measures in the event that a UFO made a nearby appearance while they were performing missile repairs in the field.

Then Jamison returned to the subject of the UFO which had been sighted as it landed in a deep ravine near the base. "The night that the Oscar Flight went down, there was a report of a UFO dropping into a canyon not too far from Malmstrom. There were some [Air Force] personnel there watching it. The canyon was steep-sided. They wouldn't send anyone down into it, and they wouldn't send any choppers at night. They were going to wait until morning to send some personnel, and maybe some choppers down. But when daylight came, this UFO—or whatever it was—just took off. I heard all of this while I was in the command post. That's what they were talking about. They were talking to the people at the site. The canyon was just off the main road out of Malmstrom, going east, where the road starts sloping down."

In my view, everything about this recollection points to the well-documented Belt, Montana UFO incident of March 24/25, 1967. As mentioned earlier, the sighting had received quite a bit of coverage in the Great Falls media immediately afterward.

If Jamison is correct, and he did indeed respond to a large-scale missile shutdown at Oscar Flight on the same date as the Belt UFO incident, then the March 16th date proposed by Bob Salas and Jim Klotz for the Oscar event would appear to be in error. Salas has now acknowledged this possibility, however, Klotz remains skeptical about the alternate date.

After completing a synopsis of my interview with Jamison, I sent it to Klotz for his review. He responded, "I think that while witnesses' memories of 'events' tend to be pretty clear, memories of dates tend to be less accurate. I am a document-driven guy and I'd like to see some documentary evidence of multiple events. Lacking this, I only wish to keep open the idea that [all of the] memories may be of a 'single' UFO- related missile shutdown event at

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Malmstrom. [On the other hand] the indications from witness testimony are that multiple events may well have occurred."

Klotz' objections have been noted and, for the record, I also would like to have access to *unaltered* documents relating to the shutdown events—as opposed to the "edited" (i.e. censored) one written by 341st Missile Wing historian David Gamble. In the early 1980s, I attempted to access through the Freedom of Information Act, Office of Special Investigations files relating to UFO sightings at Malmstrom's ICBM sites, only to be told that all such documents had already been declassified.

By this point, it should be clear to the reader that, given the testimony of a number of credible sources, this statement from OSI was simply untrue. In my opinion, documents supporting the official version of events, including unit histories, will sometimes be declassified—if only to spin the story away from the truth—whereas the documents that might shed light on the facts surrounding the missile shutdowns will remain hidden indefinitely.

I also sent my Jamison-related material to Bob Salas, seeking his reaction. He responded, "What is most interesting to me is the briefing Jamison received about how to respond if they sighted a UFO while working in the field. This would be a further indication that there had been experiences with UFOs at [Launch Facilities] prior to Jamison going out to the sites. We have also received similar information from a source we are protecting at this time."

I was curious about the testimony provided by the protected source, so I wrote to Salas and asked for a little background information. His response was intriguing, to say the least. Salas told me,

This information is from a person—I'll call him Mr. X—who was out in the field working to put the Echo Flight missiles back on line. The conversation took place on November 18, 2004, and was initiated by X. Although we had initially made contact years earlier, he was now concerned that he could pass away without anyone knowing some of the details about his experience. He stated that he was making a video of himself telling his story and giving it to his wife for safekeeping. In addition, he stated that the experience so affected him that it was difficult for him to relive it and contemplate its impact.

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He first told me about his credentials. He was triple-qualified on Minuteman systems up to and including the latest system—Wing VI. His statement was that on March 16th [1967] he was off-duty when he was notified that the Echo sites had gone down and was directed to be part of a response team. They were working on [Launch Facility] E-7 that afternoon to bring it back to alert status. By the time they had finished their checkout, and were beginning the start-up procedure, it was beginning to get dark. The system went up normally at first, up to the alignment of the collimator. But then [there was] no acquisition—the collimator would not align—three or four minutes into the alignment process. Their reading was Channel 11 DC Coupler NO-GO. We had a 'VRSA' readout—I don't remember what the letters stood for—on the console that told us, in general terms, what problem there was with the bird. Channel 11 was one of the messages we could get and probably did get when the birds shut down.

About this time, the guard up top shook the ladder and motioned X to come up it. Once outside, he saw a round orange glowing object hovering 'not far out' at about 30 degrees from the horizon, which was witnessed by the security guard as well. He recalls his reaction at the time as fascination but not fear. The guard, however, was quite shaken. X ordered the guard to call the Command Post. Meanwhile, strangely enough, he decided to continue his job of bringing the missile back on alert. They tried the start-up procedure again and again. Each time they reached the point of collimator alignment it would 'crap out'. During these attempts, he noticed—by going up the ladder from time to time—that the glow of the object would change to a 'pulsation.- He stated that he did hear a low-level hum, and could definitely feel the energy field [emanating] from the object, but did not feel threatened by it. Moreover, he had the sense that the object was literally directing these pulses to the particular part of the missile system that was failing—the Guidance and Control System Coupler. X stated that he had no doubt whomever was in the object knew the most vulnerable part of the system and were demonstrating that they could indeed disable the missiles.

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[X said that] after about 10 to 15 minutes, the object flew off, slowly at first and then rapidly. After the missile was brought back on alert, he reported to the base and was debriefed by some Lt. Col. [whose name he cannot recall.] He was told the event was not to be discussed with anybody. When I last spoke to him, he said in retrospect he too found it strange that he was not frightened of the object, and strange that he kept trying to run his procedures while knowing the object was overhead. One could speculate that the intelligence behind the object had encouraged him to continue because it wanted to demonstrate it was familiar with the process to re-target the missile, and knew how to disable the process. Pretty amazing stuff, but as I mentioned before, I have a lot of confidence this individual is telling the truth, and we have records relating to his assignment at Malmstrom during that period.

Regarding the timing of the two full-flight shutdowns, Salas said, I [now] think it is more likely that Oscar Flight went down on some date after the Echo Flight event and that it could very well have been on the same day as the Belt sighting. One of the factors that leads me to that opinion is the lack of comment about two flights going down in the [now- declassified] telex that went out, and in the unit history. If the two had gone down on the same day, that would have been mentioned. The reason, I think, Oscar wasn't mentioned later on is because, by then, the Air Force wanted to keep a secrecy-lid on [the shutdowns] and avoid the possibility of a leak [that would confirm] a growing and continuing problem. That would have made quite some headlines in the press."

More recently, Salas wrote to tell me,

I recently spoke with Dick Evans… who I also knew back in the days of Malmstrom. He was also a DMCCC at the time of the Echo shutdowns. In fact he told me he was at Kilo Flight the morning of the Echo Shutdown... Kilo Flight was the 'Command Flight' for the 490th Squadron, which included Oscar Flight. [Evans] told me that he has no recollection of Oscar shutting down or having any problems on that morning. He would have certainly been notified. I just received this information a few days ago...That

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info plus the other witnesses already mentioned [primarily Jamison] make for a strong case that Oscar did not go down on [March] 16th.

With respect to why Oscar was not mentioned in any of the historical documents, or in any telexes later on, I offer the following: You recall that Dr. Roy Craig was a member of the Condon Committee and had 'heard' of the Echo shutdown being associated with UFO sightings in a 'secret' communication to him. He said in his book that he visited Malmstrom soon after hearing that. He was essentially stonewalled after arriving and told that UFOs had nothing to do with the Echo shutdown. Because I was told not to speak to anyone about my incident, and it was classified, I am sure everyone on base [who was] aware of it was under this same order.

We all know the Condon Committee was a whitewash and probably controlled by Air Force to be just that. But they certainly did not want the Condon Report to contain anything about 20 missiles going down during two UFO events within a week of each other. I do not find it hard to believe that Air Force buried the Oscar incident as best they could without reporting it, as they did with Echo, because of this timing of the Condon Committee visit. The Air Force had no reason to highlight Oscar because it went down under the same circumstances as Echo, so handling Echo would also have handled Oscar and all of Wing 1.

In addition to the uncertainty over the actual date of the Oscar Flight shutdown, there is also a question regarding the exact number of malfunctioning missiles. Salas had mentioned "six to eight" in his 1996 online article, "The Malmstrom AFB UFO/Missile Incident." Targeting Team officer Bob Jamison, on the other hand, distinctly recalled a full-flight, ten missile failure at Oscar. When I asked Salas to comment on this discrepancy, he responded, "With regards to how many birds went down at Oscar, I have always deferred to my missile commander Miewald [who recalled] something less than ten. However, my own gut tells me it was all of them. I just can't remember for sure and Miewald seems to be certain."

So, is Jamison correct when he recalls the Oscar Flight incident occurring

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on the same night as the Belt canyon UFO incident? In a follow-up telephone interview with him, I mentioned Jim Klotz' suggestion that, due to the passage of time, he had inadvertently compressed two memories into one. That is, the Oscar shutdown he recalls had occurred on one night, while the two-way radio chatter he overheard at the command post—about a UFO "trapped" in a canyon—had actually occurred on some other night in early 1967.

Jamison immediately and emphatically rejected this scenario. He told me that while eavesdropping on the radio conversation, he had recognized the location of the canyon being discussed, just outside the town of Belt, and realized that his team would be traveling past it, on U.S. Route 87, once it had been authorized to proceed to Oscar Flight. Knowing this, he had made it a point to look out the Crew Cab's windows as they approached the canyon—actually known as Frenchman's Coulee—to see if he could detect the UFO. Jamison said that as the Crew Cab passed by, he saw several lights just off the road, which he which he took to be Air Force vehicle lights, but he couldn't see a glow or any other indication of the UFO itself. Given this particular recollection, Jamison is convinced that the Oscar Flight missile shutdown and the Belt UFO incident had unquestionably occurred on the same night.

Later in this conversation, Jamison unexpectedly mentioned yet another UFO-related shutdown during that same period, remarking, "About two weeks later, on the other side of the base—I think it was India Flight—there were some more UFOs reported, and four or five missiles went down. I went to one of the sites and the other teams went to the other ones. As before, I didn't see any [UFOs] myself." He added that he recalled the incident had occurred during daylight hours.

Jamison said after the Oscar Flight incident, everyone in the missile maintenance squadron had been talking about UFOs. He also said lie had asked a few of the missile guards about the sightings, "I talked to several people, mostly Security Alert Team [members], who personally witnessed these events. They obviously saw something and were visibly shaken. I remember one guard telling of seeing two small red lights off at a distant i They then began to close-in toward the missile site. As he was telling me this, the guard broke down and began weeping, so I don't know what happened

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after that. I thought it best not to pursue the matter further. I never even mentioned it to him later on." Jamison believes that particular conversation occurred sometime between the Oscar Flight shutdown incident and the subsequent incident at India Flight, but he couldn't remember which flight the guard had mentioned.

In my view, Robert Jamison has provided crucial testimony regarding the 1967 Malmstrom AFB UFO incidents. He adamantly asserts that the base's missile maintenance commanders had been fully aware of UFO- involvement in the Minuteman ICBM shutdowns, as they were occurring. As with Bob Salas, Don Crawford, Louis Kenneweg, and the others who have come forward with the facts, Jamison has provided an invaluable service to the American people by simply telling the truth.

The missile shutdowns are important because, in addition to their impact on U.S. national security, they conceivably provide insight into the motivations of those operating the UFOs. Unlike the cases of mere surveillance at ICBM sites, these incidents may well represent an intentional effort to interfere with our ability to launch nuclear missiles. However, before we can ascertain this with some degree of confidence, we need to know whether the shutdowns were indeed premeditated acts or merely the result of some kind of field effect generated by the UFOs which inadvertently caused the disruptions. While I and most of my former/retired USAF sources believe that the malfunctions were intentional, and intended to be demonstrations of some sort, no one outside of the Pentagon and CIA knows for certain.

The Reluctant Source

In 1985, I presented my UFO lecture at a community college—which I will not identify here—in Washington state. As previously noted, my program primarily examines UFO activity at Air Force nuclear missile sites. Afterwards, I was approached by one of the school's staff members—he must remain anonymous—who informed me that his brother, Ron, had been stationed at Malmstrom AFB during the same period my father was there. According to this individual, Ron was assigned to the 341st Missile

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Maintenance Squadron and had once spoken about his own involvement in a UFO-related incident at the base.

Apparently, two Minuteman I missiles had gone off alert status—malfunctioned—just after Air Force Security Police had reported a UFO in their vicinity. Ron had been part of the maintenance team that was rushed out to the stricken missiles to repair them. According to his brother, Ron's team found that metal circuitry, in an unspecified component, had mysteriously melted. This had occurred in each missile, even though they were located several miles apart.

I asked for Ron's telephone number and called him shortly thereafter to see if he would confirm the story. As soon as I related what his brother had told me, Ron became quite agitated and very curtly told me that he wouldn't discuss the matter. So, I let it drop, at least for the moment. I did, however, keep a written summary of the story in a notebook, as well as the two brothers' phone numbers, for future reference.

In 1998, thinking that perhaps enough time had passed, I decided to press the matter once again. I called Ron's brother, to learn whether I might have an opportunity to renew the inquiry. I didn't call Ron directly, given the earlier rebuff. My intention was to gauge the situation indirectly. According to his brother, Ron was quite unhappy, to say the least, that he had discussed the incident with me. Upon learning this, I surmised that the odds of Ron going on-the-record, even at this late date, were not good. Nevertheless, I pressed the issue and told Ron's brother that a number of former and retired Air Force personnel were slowly but surely coming forward and discussing the ICBM-related UFO incidents at Malmstrom AFB, which had occurred in 1967. My hope was that Ron would finally feel comfortable discussing his own experience with me. Accordingly, I asked his brother if he would contact Ron on my behalf. As expected, I was later told that Ron still refused to discuss the incident.

Well, I am nothing if not persistent, so I called Ron's brother yet again in 2004. This time, there was interesting, if not helpful news. He told me. "Ron will take that secret to the grave. Awhile back, he got in touch with a [retired] colonel who knew about the incident, and they both agreed that is was something that they were never going to discuss." So, given the finality of

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this report, I have abandoned the notion of further contacts with the two brothers.

“A Lot Like the UFO Night”

When I interviewed former Minuteman missile technician Gerald Koertner, regarding his memories of the Malmstrom missile shutdowns of 1967, he had another interesting recollection. Toward the end of the conversation, he said, “About a year or two later, there was a problem in the missile field one night. By that time, I had a little more rank and sometimes I was allowed to conduct debriefings, as an informal team chief, when I came back to the hanger from the field. Anyway, that night, after the routine debriefing, they asked me to go across the hall to Job Control to debrief those guys too.”

Koertner continued, “When you were called into Job Control it was quite impressive, to say the least, with all of the back-lit boards and not much other lighting. There was a Colonel, Tony Prince, working that night. He was a great guy with the enlisted men, very supportive. When I explained the problem [at this one missile site], he made reference to, uh, he said something like, ‘This is a helluva lot like the UFO night.’ Apparently they were having trouble with other sites that night—besides the one I reported—but I don’t think the other problems had anything to do with the one I was working on [which involved the site’s access doors.] I remember Col. Prince asking me questions about whether we had noticed any unusual or out-of-the-way things happening. If I remember correctly, there were five or six guys with him in there and they all seemed more- than-interested in what I was saying. As far as my knowing about a lot of missiles going red [malfunctioning] I can’t confirm that.”

Although Col. Prince’s comments to Koertner can not be considered as confirmation of UFO-related missile problems that particular night, his pointed comparison between that evening’s difficulties and those occurring on “the UFO night”, is in itself revealing.

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12. Leaving Tracks

As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, I first became interested in UFOs after witnessing five of them being tracked on radar at Malmstrom AFB's air traffic control tower in mid-to-late March 1967. Although I've attempted to discover whether my experience related to either of the incidents at Echo and Oscar Flights, this remains unclear, given the numerous UFO incursions at ICBM sites outside the base during that period.

Much later, in the early 1980s, I attempted to contact a few retired FAA controllers still living near the base, in Great Falls, Montana, to learn whether any of them would be willing to go on the record about the "unknown" targets which periodically appeared, however fleetingly, on their radar scopes. By that time, I had interviewed enough Air Force veterans to know that UFO activity at Malmstrom's missile sites in the late 1960s had been widespread. I of course already knew about one radar tracking of unidentified targets during that period and I suspected there had been other such incidents as well.

Unfortunately, when I called the retired controllers, my inquiries were coolly received as one after the other politely deflected my questions about UFOs. According to most of them, UFOs had never been tracked on radar at Malmstrom—which I knew was not the case—while one of them simply told me that he did not wish to discuss the subject. So I bided my time and, much, much later, in 2003, I tried again. My first contact, Grover Austad, was cautious at first, until I explained who I was and the reason for my inquiry. Apparently satisfied about my intentions, Austad not only told me about tracking UFOs at Malmstrom AFB and elsewhere, he also put me in touch with a few of his former colleagues. Brief summaries of my conversations with each of them now follow:

In the late 1960s, Grover Austad worked as an FAA controller at the SAGE building on Malmstrom AFB. In a telephone interview conducted in December 2003, he described his involvement in the radar tracking of a UFO. "One night this object came on the radar and it was moving at tremendous speed," he said, "We estimated that it was flying about 2,400 mph. Now, the

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controllers who worked at SAGE knew about the SR-71—even though it was still secret. [This was confirmed to me by a retired high-level FAA administrator.] But this thing, whatever it was, was even faster than that." (The SR-71 "Blackbird" still holds the official record as the worlds fastest jet —at 2,193 mph—a speed achieved during a short- duration, straight-course flight on July 28, 1976.)

Austad continued, "So I called ADC—that's Air Defense Command_ to see if they had it too. The controller I talked to said, 'Yeah, I see it, but UFOs don't exist, do they?' Then he laughed sarcastically. The object played around for a few minutes. It zigzagged back-and-forth, covering hundreds of miles. Then it disappeared off the scope."

Austad said that this tracking, and similar ones that he only heard about, involving other controllers at Malmstrom, were formally logged by the FAA controllers and then reported to the ADC radar unit at SAGE. "We always told them about what we saw [on radar], but they never gave us any feedback."

Austad then said that while the UFO he had tracked at SAGE was certainly startling, he had once been involved in another, truly astonishing incident. "I don't remember the exact year that this occurred," he said, "but one time, when I worked at the [FAA Air Traffic Control] Center in Salt Lake, we got a phone call from a radio station in Burley, Idaho. People had been calling them to report a huge cigar-shaped vehicle in the sky, about 60 to 70 miles north of Burley. So I called Hill AFB to tell them about it, and they scrambled an F-80. A little while later, the pilot radioed the base and said, 'Well, this thing is up there, big as life, and 21 disc-shaped craft just came out of it!' About ten minutes later, he came back on and said, 'I'm at [my operational ceiling], but this thing is still far above me—at around 80,000 feet.' That was probably the most spectacular incident that I remember."

Perhaps significantly, if the huge cigar-shaped UFO was located some 70 miles north of Burley when it released the discs, it would have been less than 30 miles west of the National Reactor Testing Station. Established in 1949, under the auspices of the Atomic Energy Commission, the NRTS was for many years the site of the largest concentration of nuclear reactors in the world. Over time, 52 were built and operated there, including the U.S. Navy's

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first prototype submarine reactor.

Multiple incidents of unexplained aerial phenomena were indeed reported at the NRTS in the mid-1950s—the general time-frame of Austad's account. For example, in his book, *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy*, researcher Donald Keyhoe wrote:

"Saturday, June 26, 1954, at 12:40 A.M., a blinding glow—like an enormous floodlight suddenly appeared over the Atomic Energy Commissions test station in eastern Idaho. Coming with the suddenness of an explosion, it dumbfounded night-shift workers who had just left the AEC plant.

Two of the witnesses, Kelly Brooks and A. L. Taylor, reported that the light remained motionless in the sky for several seconds, illuminating the ground for six or eight miles around. Then, rising at tremendous speed, it vanished.

Several times in the past three months identical lights had 'exploded' over the AEC plant. They were said to resemble gigantic flash bulbs. Until now this had been kept secret by the AEC. Hastily efforts were made to hide this incident too.

But the startled AEC workers were not under blackout orders. Within 30 minutes night-shift workers had phoned the Idaho Falls Post Register, and now the AP had it."[1]

After summarizing his knowledge of the UFO sighting near Burley, Idaho, Austad concluded our conversation by suggesting that I call some of the other retired FAA controllers who still lived in Great Falls. He gave me the names of the ones that he could remember and I began contacting them.

When I called Dean Goodman, he said that he didn't recall an occasion when he had personally tracked a UFO on radar at Malmstrom AFB. However, he did remember overhearing some of the other controllers speaking about such incidents. Goodman said that those conversations had

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probably occurred in the 1960s but, because so much time had passed, he couldn't provide any details about them.

However, when I called retired controller Paul Selley, it seemed like I had hit the jackpot. Selley was friendly and talkative when I introduced myself and explained the purpose of my call. At first, he mentioned only one UFO-tracking incident during the years that he worked at Malmstrom's RAPCON center, saying, "Yeah, I was on that night when we tracked the UFOs. There were five of them. We tracked them for a short time and then they just disappeared. They were moving really fast—they went across the screen in no time. At first, we thought it might have been some high-altitude aircraft that the Air Force was testing, but to have five targets on the screen at once, that explanation wasn't too realistic."

I was startled and elated to hear Selley refer to *five* UFOs being simultaneously tracked on radar at RAPCON. That was precisely the number of unknown targets I had observed on the screen that spring night in 1967, just after I had entered the "radar room". (Only later did I learn that the room's formal name was RAPCON.) Now, decades later, I had finally located an FAA controller who had not only worked at RAPCON during that era, but who may have actually witnessed the incident with which I was familiar.

Trying to contain my excitement, I quickly asked Selley, "At any time during the tracking, did the five targets stop and hover?" After a second or two, he answered, "No, I don't remember that. They just moved across the screen really fast." I then asked him if Air Force fighters had been scrambled to intercept them. "Not that I recall," he responded.

With these answers, it became obvious that the UFO-tracking incident described by Selley could not have been the same one that I had witnessed at RAPCON. The five unknown targets pointed out to me on the radar screen had been essentially stationary during the minute or so that I stood before it. They appeared to be clustered together in some sort of irregular formation. Furthermore, I had been told by the controller who was present that jet fighters had been launched to investigate the objects.

I asked Selley if he could recall the year that his five-target incident had occurred, but he could not. Because Grover Austad had already

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acknowledged that UFOs had been tracked more than once at Malmstrom in the late 1960s, it occurred to me that there may have been more than one incident when five unknown targets had been simultaneously tracked during those years. I asked Selley if he remembered a similar five-target incident. “Not that I recall,” he said, “At least, not while I was on [shift] Some of the other guys may know about another time.’

I have to confess that I was deeply disappointed that Selley had not described the same radar tracking that I had witnessed in 1967. It would have been personally gratifying to have located another eyewitness who could verify the exact incident that had been the catalyst for my decades- long investigation of UFOs. Nevertheless, Selley’s detailed account of his own experience clearly substantiated Grover Austad’s statement that bona fide UFOs had indeed appeared on FAA radar scopes at Malmstrom in the late 1960s.

Hoping to identify the RAPCON controller who had alerted me to the UFOs that he was tracking, I described him to Selley. I may have never known his last name, even when I worked there. His first name I had forgotten decades ago. Even though he was a large man, he was soft- spoken and had demonstrated a gentle, almost fatherly manner toward me. He kept his dark hair slicked-back and usually wore a cardigan sweater over a white dress shirt. “That sounds like Bob Grasser,” Selley said, “He was a supervisor at the time.” I asked if Grasser still lived in Great Falls. “He used to. He’s dead now.” He then added, “Most of those supervisors [who worked at RAPCON during that era] are now dead.”

When I asked Selley to estimate how many times UFOs had been tracked at RAPCON during the period that he worked there, he immediately responded, “It wasn’t just once. I was on several times when we picked them up. It was strictly at night, usually between 7 o’clock and 11 o’clock. Now, some of [the incidents] might have been during the midnight shift—I worked them all—but I don’t recall any during that time, but there might have been some. I don’t remember tracking them in the daytime.”

When I asked him to describe exactly how the UFOs appeared on radar, he said, “All of a sudden, they would just pop-up out of nowhere and cross our screens in just a few seconds. They were so fast that you couldn’t take your

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eye off them or they'd be gone. We'd call [the Air Force] to find out if they had [any of their own aircraft] up, but they never did." Referring to the Air Defense Command radar operators working at Malmstrom's SAGE building, he added, "We heard rumors that they were tracking the objects too, but whenever we asked them about it, they would just clam-up, and wouldn't verify it. Sometimes, they would claim that we were just tracking false targets, but they never would confirm that we were tracking UFOs."

Despite these denials, Selley said that he and the other controllers all held the same opinion about the nature of the unknown targets. "We thought that they were [bona fide] UFOs," he said, "We didn't have anything that could move across the screen as fast as they did. They were moving at thousands of miles per hour, faster than the SR-71."

Selley suggested that I call O.P. "Pote" Morrow, who had once been his supervisor, although not at the time of the UFO trackings in the 1960s. Morrow worked as a supervisor at RAPCON from 1967 to 1980. Initially, he said that he didn't remember any incidents when UFOs had been tracked on radar at Malmstrom. However, when I mentioned that I had once worked as a janitor at RAPCON, and had been told that fighters had been scrambled to intercept five UFOs, he interrupted me and said, "You know, you've jogged my memory. Now that you've mentioned it, I do recall something about fighters being sent up one time to chase unknown targets. They went southwest, but when they got out there, they couldn't see anything. They were vectored right to the spot but nothing was there."

I then told Morrow that I had later been informed (by another source who worked at SAGE) that the UFOs I had seen on the radar scope had been southeast, not southwest, of Malmstrom. He responded, "Well, if I remember correctly, the fighters were scrambled southwest. Now, that doesn't mean that they couldn't have gone elsewhere [later on]." Morrow couldn't remember how many unknown targets were being tracked at the time, but there had been more than one. Because he couldn't remember the year that this incident had occurred, it is unclear whether it was the same UFO-tracking that I had witnessed at RAPCON.

Morrow concluded our conversation by suggesting that I call "Bud" Kittleson. Tim Mullen and Louis Nagey. I have not been able to locate

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Nagey. According to Morrow, Kittleson was the FAA's Planning and Procedures Officer at Malmstrom, as well as the liaison coordinator between the Air Force and the FAA. When I called him to ask about UFOs being tracked at RAPCON and SAGE, he said, "There were objects that were unknown that were tracked on radar out near Lewistown, and some closer to Great Falls. There were some occasions where [the Air Force] did scramble aircraft out of Great Falls. As far as I know, nothing was found." He said he didn't remember an incident when five unknowns were simultaneously tracked. However, significantly, Kittleson had acknowledged that fighters had been launched to intercept UFOs on more than one occasion.

When I called Tim Mullen, he said that he didn't recall even one occasion when UFOs had been tracked at Malmstrom AFB. He did, however, suggest that I call Joe Weinzetl. Weinzetl had worked at Malmstrom's RAPCON center from 1958-1978. When I mentioned my part-time job there in 1966-67, and asked if he remembered me, he responded, "Yeah, I remember a young, red-haired janitor who swabbed in and out of there. I didn't know you were a teenager though." Of all the retired FAA controllers whom I had talked to, Weinzetl was the only one who remembered me.

Then the conversation turned to the subject of UFOs: "There were a couple of times when Jerry Webster and I tracked unknown objects moving at high speeds. I remember we estimated that one of them was traveling around 1,700 miles per hour. It was at high-altitude and only appeared on our screen for about 20 seconds. On another occasion, Paul [Selley] was there with me when we tracked one. Whenever something like that happened, we called the [FAA] In-Route Traffic Control Center and told them about it. But that's where we left it. We never heard anything back once we reported it."

Retired FAA controller Jerry Webster confirmed Joe Weinzetl's account and indicated that he would be meeting with him in Lincoln, MT, in late June. He asked that I write to him after he had had an opportunity to review the incidents with Weinzetl. I e-mailed him in July 2004, twice, but he never responded, presumably because he didn't wish to pursue the matter further.

I am asking that other former or retired radar operators, both former/retired FAA controllers and former/retired U.S. military personnel, who have tracked UFOs at any nuclear missile base to contact me at the email address listed in

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Appendix A.

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13. Science, Sort of

"From time to time in the history of science, situations have arisen in which a problem of ultimately enormous importance went begging for adequate attention simply because that problem appeared to involve phenomena so far outside the current bounds of scientific knowledge that it was not even regarded as a legitimate subject of serious scientific concern. That is precisely the situation in which the UFO problem now lies. One of the principal results of my own recent intensive study of the UFO enigma is this: I have become convinced that the scientific community, not only in this country but throughout the world, has been casually ignoring as nonsense a matter of extraordinary scientific importance."[1]

—Dr. James E. McDonald

Senior Physicist, Institute of Atmospheric Physics

Professor of Meteorology, University of Arizona

Scientists universally profess allegiance to the lofty principles comprising the Scientific Method, both in the pursuit of their own research, as well as when reviewing the work of their peers. Therefore, one might predict that they will indignantly dismiss the suggestion that, on occasion, they have temporarily abandoned those cherished principles. Nevertheless, as regards the subject of UFOs, very few scientists actually practice what they preach.

In essence, to engage in science is to search for knowledge. This exploration is conducted through the systematic collection and objective analysis of facts. If one aspires to understand the nature of an unexplained phenomenon, one must first assemble and evaluate data—or, at least, impartially examine the data gathered by others—before drawing conclusions.

Unfortunately, most scientists reject outright the validity' of UFO research, refuse to engage in it, and deliberately ignore the intriguing data compiled by a handful of their more inquisitive, less-biased peers. If this were not enough, despite their profound unfamiliarity with the subject, many of these same

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intransigent individuals pontificate about UFOs in the most shameless and presumptuous manner. If they were to apply this same "methodology" to their own research, their colleagues might justifiably consider their conduct incompetent, if not fraudulent. Nevertheless, it is rare to hear a scientist speak or write knowledgeably about the UFO phenomenon, and rarer still to find one who has actually studied it.

Accuse a scientist of being closed-minded about UFOs and he or she will recoil: "I'm not closed-minded, but I am skeptical!" Because the former term implies inflexible prejudice and the latter one prudent caution, it is understandable that these UFO "skeptics" would prefer to view themselves in a more flattering light.

One scientist who has advocated a comprehensive, unbiased investigation the UFO phenomenon, astronomer Dr. Bernard Haisch, defines a Skeptic as, "One who practices the method of suspended judgment, engages in rational and dispassionate reasoning as exemplified by the scientific method, shows willingness to consider alternative explanations without prejudice based on prior beliefs, and who seeks out evidence and carefully scrutinizes its validity."[2]

By Haisch's definition, very few scientists are true skeptics on the subject of UFOs. On the contrary, over the years, most have behaved as self-appointed experts, having all the answers, without first investigating any of the facts. Although scientists profess a deep curiosity' about little understood or unknown phenomena, when it comes to UFOs, this assertion rings hollow. At the moment, the UFO phenomenon is a blind spot in most scientists' field of vision. There is definitely something there to be seen, but they can not, or will not, bring themselves to take a look.

As noted above, the late Dr. James McDonald—one of the few scientists to have actually studied the UFO phenomenon before holding forth on the subject—once pointedly criticized the thoroughly unprofessional posture toward UFOs he observed among his colleagues and the scientific community at large.

Sad to say, some 40 years after Dr. McDonald's lament, the same smug, dismissive attitude toward the phenomenon remains firmly entrenched in scientific circles, resulting in a pervasive, self-imposed ignorance about

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UFOs among those who supposedly seek the truth. At the beginning of the 21st century, it remains true that the overwhelming majority of scientists, if they consider UFOs at all, consider them to be beneath their dignity, and worthy of outright derision. With this self-righteous stance, they have effectively abdicated their collective professional responsibility in the most *unscientific* manner. This is not so much an accusation as it is 3n objective statement of fact.

Fortunately, despite the collective disinterest in UFOs exhibited by the scientific com m unity as a whole, there have been a few brave pioneers. In the mid-1960s, Jim McDonald was well ahead of the curve, with his repeated, plaintive calls for a legitimate investigation of the UFO phenomenon. Seeking to review the available data for himself, he persistently demanded an opportunity to review the Air Forces UFO files—at least those held by Project Blue Book—and was ultimately granted repeated access to the ones that were not classified.

As noted earlier, following those reviews, McDonald wrote, "… There are hundreds of good cases in the Air Force files that should have led to top-level scientific scrutiny of [UFOs] years ago, yet these cases have been swept under the rug in a most disturbing way by Project Blue Book investigators and their consultants."[3]

Despite, or perhaps because of, the Air Force's ongoing attempts to suppress the frequently high-quality data on UFOs it collected, McDonald began to investigate the phenomenon on his own time and at his own expense, while ignoring the very real risk to his scientific reputation. This diligence paid off and, by 1968, McDonald was widely regarded—although not among his still-dubious peers—as one of the world's leading scientific experts on UFOs. Consequently, he was invited to address congress on the subject, during hearings held that year. McDonald's full statement before the House Committee on Science and Astronautics, presented on July 29th, may be found in the U.S. Congressional Record, as well as on the Internet.

While acknowledging that the overwhelming majority of UFO sightings undoubtedly had prosaic explanations, and that a great many questions about the phenomenon remained unanswered, McDonald succinctly summarized his conclusions regarding the most credible of the unexplained cases: "My

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own present opinion, based on two years of careful study, is that UFOs are probably extraterrestrial devices engaged in something that might very tentatively be termed 'surveillance'."[4]

Although this was merely an opinion, it was after all an *informed* opinion on UFOs, something very few other scientists could offer, then or now. Many of McDonald's published papers, private research notes, and personal letters relating to his investigations of the UFO phenomenon are now accessible online, providing insight into the cautious, rational reasoning underlying his dramatic conclusions.

There is an old joke about the intellectual who sniffs, "Well, it may work in fact, but it will never work in theory." While most UFO skeptics arc quick to dismiss as impossible the idea that UFOs are alien spacecraft, very few of them will ever make the effort to learn whether any evidence exists to suggest otherwise. Instead, they merely continue to assert that, as an idea, it simply does not work. However, as the joke implies, the real question to be asked is whether it works in fact. That is, is there evidence in the real world which lends credence to the validity of the ET hypothesis of UFOs.

Granted, the proposal that UFOs are alien spaceships is decidedly "counter-intuitive". For most scientific professionals, the notion just doesn't make sense and almost certainly has no basis in reality. However, as is often the case in science, many ideas which initially seem impossible, or at least highly unlikely, eventually turn out to be true. As a noted cosmologist once observed, "The greatest obstacle to the advancement of science is the illusion of knowledge—the notion that one already knows the answers."

Precisely. At the end of the day, practicing science still involves asking questions and seeking answers, whatever those answers turn out to be. However, a scientist must actually adhere to, not just reflexively espouse, these fundamental principles. Pontificating about UFOs from the comfort of the armchair contributes nothing to the solution to the problem. To honestly attempt an understanding of UFOs, one must actually *investigate* the UFO phenomenon, however pointless or distasteful this proposal might seem to some. As that street-smart sage. New York Yankees catcher Yogi Berra, once observed, "You can see a lot just by looking."

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Occam's Rusty Razor

Frequently, UFO skeptics invoke Occam's Razor to support their position that there are far more likely, prosaic explanations for the UFO phenomenon than the extraterrestrial spaceship theory. In essence, the principle of Occam's Razor states that, all things being equal, the *simplest* explanation for an unexplained phenomenon is probably the correct one. In other words, conventional explanations—natural or man-made phenomena—undoubtedly account for all UFO sightings.

But is the basic premise of simplicity-as-truth always valid, or is it flawed? Consider, for example, gravity. The explanation for it offered by Isaac Newton—whereby physical objects possess an attractive property, proportional to their mass, that draws them toward one another—appears simple, straightforward, and fits the observable facts. Indeed, the English scientists revolutionary theory, experimentally validated, provided an explanation of gravity which endured unchallenged for over two hundred years. Then along came Albert Einstein.

In the early 20th Century, Einstein created his own, one-man scientific revolution by introducing the twin theories of Special and General Relativity. Among other things, General Relativity postulates that space and time are an inextricably interconnected entity which is distorted, or curved, by the presence of physical objects. In fact, said Einstein, gravity is actually a function of curved spacetime. Hence, Newtons apple did not fall to the ground because of the attractive property of the Earth. Rather, the Earth created a curved depression in spacetime and the apple merely took the path of least resistance by sliding down into it. Oh, by the way, Einstein also found that gravity bends light.

One un-simple aspect of Special Relativity is the dilation of time, whereby it moves faster or slower, depending on whether it is being measured on a stationary or moving timepiece. Moreover, says Einstein, moving objects actually shorten in length in the direction they are traveling. And, last but not least, matter and energy are variations of the same thing and, sometimes, a handful of matter can release enough energy to destroy a city.

All of this is simple stuff, right? Old Occam would get it, wouldn't he? Well, maybe not.

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After an extensive evaluation of experimental data, science now considers Einstein's explanation of gravity to be the correct one. But is it the simplest one, as Occam's Razor dictates it should be? Is it less complicated, more reasonable and straightforward than Newton's? No, it is not. In fact, the bizarre, mind-bending, often paradoxical principles advanced by the two relativistic theories still elude the intellectual grasp of most of humanity one hundred years after they were published. Nevertheless, physicists have long considered Einstein's ideas to be perceptive and accurate assessments of cosmological order and function. That said, those ideas certainly can not—by any stretch of the imagination—be described as simple, common sense answers to important questions.

If the concepts advanced by Einstein's theories do not effectively challenge the simplicity-as-truth premise of Occam's Razor, or sufficiently affront common sense, then consider what the other pillar of 20th Century science, the Theory of Quantum Mechanics, proposes.

One tenet, called the Uncertainty Principle, asserts that the more we know about a particle's location in space, the less we can know about its velocity. Conversely, the more we know about any given particle's velocity—by measuring it—the less we can know about its location. Another Quantum principle states that certain attributes of particles, including position, velocity, direction of movement, and spin, can not even be defined until they are observed. Before that moment, any given particle exists in what is termed a "superposition of states." In other words, its very nature can not be said to exist until it has first been examined. Finally, Quantum Theory maintains that light—composed of waves of photons—exists as a "wave-particle duality", in which it is neither one or the other but nevertheless exhibits certain properties of both.

Physicists Gary and Kenny Felder write,

Quantum mechanics says that… the photon really, genuinely, and importantly, does not have a specific location until we measure one. [This] doesn't seem to make sense. But another school of thought says, why should it make sense? After all, humans evolved in a world of 'normal' objects, and we developed a facility called 'intuition' that helped us survive in that world,

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by helping us predict the effects of our actions. That physical intuition was, and is, a great asset. But perhaps it shouldn't be too surprising that it becomes a liability when we try to apply it to areas that we didn't evolve for. Quantum mechanical laws generally only have measurable effects when applied to things that are too small to see, so we never evolved an understanding of them, so they seem bizarre. In fact, at roughly the same time that quantum mechanics first began to suggest that very small things defy our intuition, Einstein was proposing his special theory of relativity which shows that very fast things defy our intuition; and then his general theory of relativity, which concerns the odd behavior of very big things.[5]

In other words, taking into account both Relativity and Quantum Mechanics, much of what early 21st Century scientists consider to be factual, that is, "real", is not simple or straightforward at all. In fact, it' downright counter-intuitive. Despite this state of affairs, the vast majority of UFO skeptics and debunkers—there *is* a difference between the two—have yet to consider the possibility that alien visitation might also occur in a counter-intuitive manner, for example, by the utilization of higher- dimensional space —hyperspace—to effectively by-pass Einstein's light speed limitation. If ever there was a counter-intuitive theory, hyperspace is it, nevertheless this concept is rapidly gaining support among theorists whose work involves deciphering cosmic architecture and operation.

So, instead of acknowledging the general lack of simplicity and, in fact, the *predominance* of counter-intuitive high-strangeness inherent in our current paradigm, UFO skeptics and debunkers ironically resort to quoting Occam's Law as if it were an unassailable pillar of wisdom, applicable to all questions involving UFOs.

With rare exceptions, these persons have undertaken no research on the UFO phenomenon and, therefore, their reactive response is almost always a smoke screen—recognized or not—to hide the fact that they have not done their homework, and have no idea what they are talking about. Ostensibly, this type of evasive and disingenuous behavior would be abhorrent to adherents of the scientific method, nevertheless, it is continuously and pervasively practiced by UFO debunkers—laypersons and professional

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scientists alike.

Granted, simplistic sloganeering—Long Live Occam!—does require far less effort than actually doing research, but does it bring one any closer to the facts? One is tempted to conclude that by not investigating the UFO phenomenon—prior to making unequivocal pronouncements about it—many debunkers are attempting to avoid the potential threat to their own worldview, which might arise should they actually research the subject and unexpectedly discover that things are not as previously assumed.

Yup, whether one is intellectually timid, or just plain pompous, it's simply much easier and safer to presuppose that some things, like aliens visiting Earth, can not possibly be true. Clearly, practicing science by slogan has the added benefit of not having to step outside one's comfort zone.

Furthermore, there exists another fundamental flaw with Occam's Razor: the integrity of the assumptions underlying the premise of what is "simple'' or "likely". As regards UFO sightings, a debunker will assert that an atmospheric mirage or exotic military aircraft is the simpler, more likely explanation for what appeared to the observer to be an alien spaceship. But these "explanations" almost always have less to do with the specific aspects of the sighting itself—the observed phenomenon—than they do with what the skeptic *presumes* to be the remote prospect of interplanetary travel. Since the probability of such a thing is near zero, the reasoning goes, so is the likelihood that an alien spaceship was actually sighted by a human observer.

In other words, this approach to "analyzing" UFO sightings has far less to do with observation than it does with preconceived notions, dressed-up as rational skepticism. Consequently, the simplest-explanation strategy as applied to UFO sightings is almost always fallacious because, although the debunkers would have you believe otherwise, an unacknowledged, subjective point-of-view usually taints the basic premise of their argument.

The important point here is that this presumption. Hawed or not, is the basis for the skeptic's assessment of the event, rather than the facts of the case themselves. Ironically, such a premature and immaterial evaluation is considered by some to be rational and logical when, in reality, it actually deviates from a basic scientific principle: gather data first, theorize later. Predictably, UFO debunkers are ready to theorize at the drop of a hat, hut

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rarely do they gather data about the phenomenon.

Addressing this issue, researcher Joe Nyman astutely notes, “Scientists, when confronted with the unexplainable, will often appeal to Occam’s Razor, or the Principle of Parsimony, to reduce the level of exotic explanation, but often overlook the next step, that the simpler explanation is really a hypothesis that must be tested. If the simpler hypothesis does not fit the facts, it too must be discarded.”[6]

Although this necessary testing is almost never undertaken, most UFO debunkers are nevertheless inclined to believe that their merely having offered an alternate explanation for a given sighting is sufficient. Although that “simpler” proposal is completely unproved, their confident demeanor suggests that they truly believe that they have all but solved the case.

Dr. Robert Kirshner of Harvard’s Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory has also questioned the presumed wisdom underlying the simple-is-correct premise when investigating or, at least, making pronouncements about reality. Commenting upon the approach of those astronomers and cosmologists who are tempted to summarize the nature of universe in one straightforward, elegant theory, Kirshner cautions, “… the aesthetic approach, the simplest thing that you can think of, is not always a guide to the truth. Sometimes, you just have to go look—and you discover that the universe is actually much richer and more complicated than your imagination. In fact, it’s always more complicated than you imagined.”[7]

Clearly, Occam’s Razor—as a definitive, irrefutable guide for gauging the nature of unexplained phenomena—leaves a lot to be desired.

The Condon Committee

Although most scientists today are completely unaware of this fact, in the late 1960s, the sole U.S. government-sponsored scientific study of the UFO phenomenon—informally known as the Condon Committee—actually found persuasive evidence to support the contention that UFOs are something other than man-made or natural phenomena. However, as I shall discuss shortly, this startling finding was effectively masked in the project’s final report, through a spectacularly successful sleight-of-hand by the study’s own director, physicist Dr. Edward Condon, whose blatantly anti-UFO bias was

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an already matter-of-record well before the report was released in late 1968.

Ironically, for four decades, countless scientists skeptical of UFOs have pointed to the official findings of the Condon Committee as justification for ignoring the phenomenon as a legitimate subject for study. Despite their own sincerity, because of their unfamiliarity with the facts, these persons simply do not understand that they have been thoroughly duped.

Informed persons—those familiar with Condon's often scandalous behavior during his association with the study—frequently argue about whether the UFO project's flawed final report was merely the result of Condon's naked prejudice toward his subject, or the result of some as- yet undocumented government subterfuge in which he participated. Regardless, the negative spin Condon put on the committee's findings smack of whitewash, a fact bemoaned by a number of the project's own scientists, following the publication of the final report.

How and why did this travesty occur? Equally important, why did the national media slavishly portray the study as an objective scientific inquiry? The Condon Committee, formally known as the University of Colorado UFO Project, was undertaken at the Air Force's request, and funded by a $500,000 grant it provided. From 1966 to 1968, a panel of scientists from various disciplines evaluated 91 reported UFO sightings—some drawn from confidential Air Force files, others from published sources. While the investigations themselves—with a few notable exceptions—were fairly rigorous and objective, project director Condon repeatedly displayed distinctly unscientific behavior in relation to his task, while the project's coordinator, Robert Low, was caught privately enunciating what was, at the very least, an arguably questionable approach to organizing the supposedly objective investigation.

In a memorandum dated August 9, 1966, Low had written, in part, "Our study would be conducted almost entirely by non-believers who, though they couldn't possibly prove a negative result, could and probably would add an impressive body of thick evidence that there is no reality to the observations. The trick would be, I think, to describe the project so that, to the public, it would appear a totally objective study but, to the scientific community, would present the image of a group of non-believers trying their best to be

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objective but having an almost zero expectation of finding a saucer."[8]

Moreover, notes respected researcher Jerome Clark, "Low also suggested that if the study focused less on 'the physical reality of the saucer', and more on the 'psychology' and sociology of persons and groups who report seeing UFOs', then 'the scientific community would get the message.'"[9]

Low's defenders, including leading UFO debunker Phillip Klass, have tried to explain away Low's seemingly incriminating proposal for the project's composition and aims. They argue that Low was simply attempting to present the project in the most benign terms possible to dubious faculty members at the University of Colorado, in a bid to soften their resistance to participating in the controversial UFO study.

Regardless, one of the Condon Committee's concerned staff members, psychologist Dr. David R. Saunders, later leaked Low's memorandum to Donald Keyhoe, director of the civilian National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), who had long advocated an end to government secrecy on UFOs. Keyhoe subsequently shared the contents of the memo with Jim McDonald. According to Jerome Clark, "The T rick Memo confirmed McDonald's worst suspicions about the Committee. In response, he wrote a seven page letter to Condon, explaining point by point, his problems, frustration and disappointment with the Committee's shortcomings."[10]

Condon was infuriated by the letter and called a meeting of the project's staff to attempt to learn how McDonald had obtained an internal project memorandum. Saunders freely admitted that it was he who had sent the memo to Keyhoe. According to Saunders, Condon then called him "disloyal" and reportedly said, "For an act like that you deserve to be ruined professionally." At this, Saunders reports, he responded by saying that his loyalty lay with the American people, while Condon's own loyalty seemed to be to the Air Force." Saunders was subsequently fired from the project by Condon for his actions, together with another staffer, Dr. Norman Levine, who had also been involved in the memo's unauthorized release.

Following his dismissal, Saunders would later say that "to present Low as a plotter or conspirator is unfair and hardly accurate." However, he continued, Low had been "hasty and foolish to express such ideas on paper—especially

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foolish if Low really believed what he was saying."[12] Nevertheless, Saunders defended his decision to release the controversial memo, and later wrote a book, *UFOs? Yes!*, co-authored with Roger Harkins, in which he strongly criticized the actions of Low and, especially, Condon, during the UFO project.

Such criticism was well-deserved. Condon had already revealed his own suspect attitude toward the supposedly scientific study, well before the furor over the Low memorandum erupted. According to Clark, "In late January, 1967, [NICAP executives Donald Keyhoe and Richard Hall] gave Saunders a clipping from *The Elmira Star-Gazette*, dated January 26. Condon was quoted as saying [during a lecture] that he thought the government should not study UFOs because the subject was nonsense, adding, 'but I'm not supposed to reach that conclusion for another year.' Saunders was stunned. He asked if Condon could have been misquoted, but Keyhoe reported that several NICAP members had been present when Condon delivered his lecture; one of them had resigned from NICAP in protest, arguing that the Condon Committee was nothing more than pretense."

If this were not enough, it is now known that one of the committee's members, psychologist Michael Wertheimer, had openly argued against any consideration of the extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH) well before the project concluded its work, a position openly supported by project administrator, Robert Low. In other words, even before the data-gathering phase of the study was completed, some key members of the committee—including Condon himself—had already reached the de facto conclusion that UFOs could not possibly be alien spacecraft. Obviously, this rush to judgment effectively precluded an objective analysis of the facts.

To further illustrate this point, after the various case investigations had concluded, one committee investigator, astronomer William K. Hartman, had actually written that some of the unsolved cases he examined were in fact consistent with the extraterrestrial hypothesis of UFOs. When Condon read this conclusion in Hartman's draft-report, he wrote, "Good God!" and crossed out the passage. Given that it was Hartman, not Condon, who had investigated the cases in question, this negative editorial spin by the project director was at least presumptuous, if not downright deceptive.

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The UFO project's shortcomings finally came to light when an expose by John Fuller was published in the May 1968 issue of *LOOK* magazine. Titled, "Flying Saucer Fiasco", the article laid bare the various questionable actions and attitudes exhibited by some of the Condon Committee's leading members.[13] The resulting widespread public indignation was predictable and even some scientists began to question the UFO project's objectivity and purpose.

Researcher Dr. David Jacobs notes, "When the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) covered the ongoing Committee controversy in an issue of its official journal Science, Condon first promised to grant an interview apparently in the hopes of offering his side of the conflict. Shortly thereafter, however, Science editor Daniel S. Greenberg reported that Condon announced it would be 'inappropriate for Science to touch the matter, withdrew his offer of cooperation, and proceeded to enunciate high-sounding principles in support of his new-found belief that Science should not [review] the subject until after the publication if his report.'"[14]

A few other scientists, notably astronomer Frank Drake—founder of the SETI movement and an outspoken critic of the hypothesis that UFOs are alien spacecraft—expressed deep doubts about the Condon Committee's overall objectivity. At one point, Drake fired off a letter to the National Academy of Sciences, in which he argued that the UFO study had been "tainted" and should, therefore, be discredited.

But there was another type of fallout from the exposé in *LOOK* magazine, as David Jacobs further notes: "The Fuller article even helped inspire Congressional hearings. Representative J. Edward Roush [of Indiana] spoke on the House floor, arguing that Fuller's article brought up 'grave doubts about as to the scientific profundity and objectivity of the project'. In a Denver Post interview, Roush suggested that the Trick Memo proved that the Air Force had indeed been dictating the Projects direction and conclusions."[15]

The committee's final report was released in the fall of 1968. In the introduction, titled "Conclusions and Recommendations", Condon wrote: "Our general conclusion is that nothing has come from the study of UFOs in

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the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge. Careful consideration of the record as it is available to us leads us to conclude that further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced thereby."[16]

Consequently, despite the evidence amassed—nearly 30% of the cases investigated by the committee were judged to involve "unknown" craft or other unexplained phenomena—the study's final report, written by Condon himself, stated that there existed no basis for continued Air Force investigation of the UFO phenomenon. If one had read only Condon's introduction, but not the actual report itself, one might reasonably conclude that the idea of UFOs, as an objective reality unto themselves, had been irrefutably disproved. However, a careful examination of the report as a whole yields an entirely different impression.

In his 1999 book, *The UFO Enigma: A New Review of the Physical Evidence*, astrophysicist Peter A. Sturrock examined the failings of the Condon Committee and their consequences. One review of the book correctly notes, "[The Condon Committee] report has clouded all attempts at legitimate UFO research since its release. Much of the public, including the scientific community and the press, erroneously assumes that this project represents a serious, in-depth look into the issues."[17]

The review continues, "Sturrock assiduously dissects the Condon Report and makes it clear that the study is scientifically flawed. In fact, anyone who actually reads the report carefully will be surprised to find that Edward Condon, who personally wrote the Summary and Conclusions, did not investigate any of the cases. Rather it was his staff that did the legwork. That is why [Condon's summary] is internally inconsistent with the body of the document, [which supports] some UFO cases, while the summary does not."[18]

In the book, Dr. Sturrock writes about the scientific community's sharply-divided response to Condon's final report, noting that "critical reviews came from scientists who had actually carried out research in the UFO area, while the laudatory reviews came from scientists who had not carried out such research."[19]

In other words, those self-satisfied individuals who had always dismissed

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UFOs, without so much as glancing at the data, were quite pleased by Condon's claim that the subject deserved to be ignored by science—because that was already their own position. On the other hand, persons such as Jim McDonald and J. Allen Hynek, who had actually investigated the phenomenon, were outraged by Condon's misleading statements. Hynek criticized Condon's final report as "singularly slanted", noting that it had "avoided mentioning that there was embedded within the bowels of the report a remaining mystery, that the committee had been unable to furnish adequate explanations for more than a quarter of the cases examined."[20]

Unfortunately, due to the length of the Condon Committee report, which ran nearly 1000 pages, very few reporters actually read it before wrapping up their stories to meet publishing deadlines. Consequently, most media accounts covering the reports release almost invariably focused on Condon's easily-accessible, negatively-slanted conclusions—to the exclusion of the study's many positive findings about the UFO reality.

Influential columnists, including *The New York Times*' science editor, Walter Sullivan, applauded Condon's disingenuous statements as the last word on the subject and urged the Air Force to move onto more important things. Only later, long after their stories had been published, did a few inquisitive reporters actually get around to reading the UFO project members' individual reports which, in many cases, clearly pointed to the presence of an unexplained phenomenon worthy of further scientific study.

But the damage had been done. Because the initial media hoopla surrounding the release of the report had painted such a dismissive picture of UFOs, it regrettably reinforced most scientists' negative assumptions and erroneous perceptions about the phenomenon. Whatever his motives, Edward Condon had pulled off a wonderfully slick sales job—boldly dismissing all UFO sightings as the misidentification of known, natural phenomena or man-made aircraft, as well as a few hoaxes—even though his own study had concluded otherwise.

In response to the report's *official* conclusions, most scientists—led astray by both Condon's misleading remarks and the supposedly astute pundits in the national media, who should have recognized duplicity disguised as science—nodded knowingly and with great satisfaction when they read that

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Dr. Condon had finally killed the UFOs. Betrayed by a debunker—and their own biases—they relegated the phenomenon to the proverbial intellectual trash heap, and washed their hands of the whole matter.

Meanwhile, as this controversy was unfolding, out in the vast prairies surrounding America's nuclear missile bases, the UFO phenomenon—apparently unaware of its supposed non-existence—continued to assert itself, often in dramatic fashion. Sightings by Air Force security personnel of disc-shaped objects at ICBM sites were ongoing, if unpredictable, sometimes punctuated by sudden, unexplainable disruptions of the missiles' functionality, concurrent with the presence of the UFOs.

Following many of these disturbing incidents, witness statements were taken and national security non-disclosure statements were signed, whereupon the incidents became non-events, known only to a few Office of Special Investigations (OSI) agents, missile wing commanders, and their superiors at Strategic Air Command Headquarters and the Pentagon. Given the extreme secrecy surrounding these developments, the members of the Condon Committee, scientists in general, and the public as a whole, were completely unaware of them and would remain so for decades to come. Indeed, much of the material in this book will be news to the great majority of American citizens, not to mention others living all over the planet.

Now, I fully understand that the witness statements contained in various OSI reports cannot be considered to be scientifically-valid data, per se. However, should this very important and startling information—now officially declassified in a few cases, or leaked by the witnesses themselves in many others—be totally ignored by the scientific community? Obviously, I think not.

As I readily acknowledged in the introduction of this book, the facts presented in this book are not, by and large, scientific data. The testimony offered by my sources is simply anecdotal evidence, often reluctantly revealed, by dozens of highly-reliable individuals whose professional responsibilities had inadvertently and unexpectedly placed them in a position to experience the UFO phenomenon within an environment inaccessible to most persons. Those who have not worked with nuclear weapons—which is to say, the vast majority of us—have obviously had no opportunity to witness

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UFO activity in such a highly-restricted setting.

Therefore, it seems to me, whether one is a scientist or a layperson, we should all at least listen to what these persons have to say. To automatically dismiss their now-numerous, detailed accounts of UFO encounters at nuclear weapons sites as mere fantasies, or fabrications, is to suggest that those who held the fate of the entire planet in their hands during the Cold War were dangerously demented or otherwise untrustworthy. Surely, this was not the case.

In my view, the collective weight of the testimony offered by my former and retired military sources should at least give pause to even the most skeptical scientist and, hopefully, cause him or her to consider the subject of UFOs in a new light. Here, I am employing astronomer Bernard Haisch's definition of a true skeptic, and am not referring to those close-minded debunkers whose preconceived notions and uninformed opinions about UFOs remain an unfortunate impediment to the eventual scientific understanding of the phenomenon.

I deliberately differentiate between skeptics and debunkers because they are fundamentally dissimilar. At the risk of oversimplifying the issue, skeptical scientists currently view the existence of extraterrestrial UFOs as a far-fetched idea that is mildly amusing but certainly not worth pursuing. Debunkers, on the other hand, react to this proposal with righteous indignation and a crusaders zeal. For them, the suggestion that aliens might be visiting Earth is an utterly foolish notion which must be stamped out before it infects rational, properly-thinking individuals. For his part, debunker Edward Condon once went so far as to recommend that educators who presented the ET hypothesis of UFOs in schools he "publicly horse-whipped".

To be sure, there have been cases over the years where pranksters or mentally-unbalanced persons have reported non-existent experiences with UFOs and aliens. However, all too often, the media, the skeptics—and certainly the debunkers—have focused only on these incidents, and generally overlooked or dismissed—without any investigation whatsoever—the far greater number of legitimate UFO sighting reports submitted by pilots, policemen, key military personnel, and other credible witnesses.

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Of course, it goes without saying that genuine skeptics serve a beneficial and necessary role in any meaningful UFO investigation or, for that matter, in any other field of study. Upon reviewing a given case report, a skeptic asks the questions that must be asked: "What is the nature of the evidence? How was it collected? What assumptions, if any, were made when it was interpreted? Are the conclusions justified by the data? Do any other theories also explain the evidence?" And so on. These challenges are perfectly valid and routinely undertaken during the peer- review process following the publication of any scientific paper. As such, they should always be applied to published UFO research as well. In short, a skeptical perspective—if objective and judicious—is indispensable when one is attempting to decipher unknown phenomena.

By contrast, a UFO debunker's behavior is thoroughly counterproductive and frequently disruptive. Although few of these persons have actually reviewed the UFO evidence collected by others—usually by choice—they nevertheless deny its validity and, quite often, its very existence. Their attitude may be summed up as, "UFOs are utter nonsense, not worth a moment's thought, let alone scientific investigation."

Consequently, rather than asking questions, debunkers make pronouncements. Instead of doing research, they dismiss the phenomenon at the outset, a priori. To quote one writer, debunkers "are so convinced 0f the rightness of their cause that they can not even conceive that they might be wrong." Furthermore, as I have discovered, many debunkers become extremely annoyed if one dares to suggest that this kind of behavior is biased and unscientific. Sad to say, thousands of these self- righteous individuals actually teach science at colleges and universities, and ironically view themselves as paragons of enlightened thought and rational inquiry.

While it is absolutely valid to insist that rational skepticism be utilized in the analysis of any unexplained phenomenon, it is essential that one carefully and honestly differentiate between genuine, justifiable skepticism, and one's own biases. For example, refusing to undertake an objective, in-depth examination of something, simply because one believes it to be impossible, is not skepticism. Furthermore, such premeditated ignorance is not, and never will be, rational. Additionally, there is a fundamental difference between rational thought and rationalization. The former is essential to any scientific

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investigation; the latter is merely a refuge for those who have not done their homework.

It has been said that the path to knowledge begins at the moment when one confesses, “I do not know.” Unfortunately, UFO debunkers are seemingly incapable of making this humbling but essential admission. Instead, they invariably cast themselves as heroic guardians of Truth, standing tall at the gates of science and reason, tirelessly resisting what they perceive to be a rising tide of public ignorance and superstition.

Most UFO debunkers wear the label as if it were a badge of honor. This sentiment undoubtedly arises from their belief that to “debunk” UFOs is to unequivocally disprove their reality. This is simply not the case. A more accurate description of their actions would be to say that they merely explain away the phenomenon, with no real evidence to support their position. Unfortunately, a debunker’s impulse to cleanse and clarify is almost always self-sabotaged by the twin deficiencies of ignorance and prejudice. To pre-judge a subject about which one has little or no knowledge is self-evidently foolish. Nevertheless, debunkers’ doubts about UFOs are usually based not on their uncertainty about the validity of the data—which, as a rule, they have not examined—but, rather, on their preconceived belief that UFOs are nonsense, pure and simple.

Despite this fact, the debunkers themselves frequently dismiss UFO advocates as “believers”. This term is, of course, intended as a derisive epithet. The clear implication is that anyone contending the UFO phenomenon to be worthy of serious consideration has, on blind faith, embraced a modern-day myth or pseudo-religion.

Another charge leveled by debunkers is that persons such as myself, who speak publicly about UFOs, are opportunists whose sole goal is personal gain, at the expense of gullible audiences. Therefore, I have been repeatedly accused of being in “the UFO game” for the money, given that I actually have the audacity to charge colleges and universities a fee for my lecture program. I am certain that debunkers would much prefer that I conduct my research without pay, decade after decade, and fly around the country to give my lectures at my own expense. (Too bad there are no government grants to study UFOs nowadays. Curse you, Edward Condon!)

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One important and telling difference between true skeptics and mere debunkers is this: most of the latter will reject as valid all of the data and arguments presented in this book—but will have arrived at that position before reading even one word of it. Actual skeptics, on the other hand—while also unlikely to accept my arguments and conclusions—will at least carefully consider the case I present prior to passing judgment on it.

In essence, UFO debunkers are obstinately devoted to their own uninformed opinions and unacknowledged prejudices, and have no interest whatsoever in entertaining views contrary to their own. Ironically, their demeanor is usually far more emotional than rational. Such intolerance and misplaced fervor is, of course, counter to the spirit of scientific inquiry. Consequently, although they seem oblivious to the fact, debunkers unintentionally betray the very goal of their crusade.

Why, one might reasonably ask, am I so strident in my criticism of these naysayers? Because, first and foremost, they really do impede the progress of scientific understanding, despite their own self-image as champions of truth. But also, I confess, because I have had to endure so many of these zealots while speaking about UFOs at colleges and universities.

To be sure, over the last 27 years, I have also met a great many perfectly polite astronomers, physicists and psychologists who were not members of the debunking crowd. Despite their own profound unfamiliarity with the UFO phenomenon, these well-intentioned persons nevertheless felt compelled to stand up at the end of one of my lectures and calmly rebut my research findings. This type of reflexive academic response toward controversial subjects is to be expected, and I have generally regarded these persons' criticisms—despite the one or more misconceptions invariably underlying them—as an opportunity to educate those who are sincere but uninformed. Therefore, I have always attempted to respond, point-by- point, to the objections they raise.

At the other end of the spectrum, however, I have also been subjected to a great many anti-UFO tirades, hurled at me by overzealous professors whose laughably inaccurate statements about UFOs are uttered—and sometimes snarled—with unassailable conviction. Alas, I have discovered that, when it comes to UFOs, the hallowed halls of academia are awash in

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pseudoscientists.

Yes, pseudoscientists. The very same debunkers—one might also call them pseudoskeptics—who dismiss UFO research as "pseudoscience'' are worthy of the very epithet they so self-righteously hurl at UFO proponents. May I suggest that pseudoscience is precisely what a debunker engages in when he or she makes unequivocal, dismissive pronouncements about a subject he or she has never studied. Pseudoscience is also practiced when one defiantly and intentionally ignores compelling data gathered by a few courageous scientists who have actually dared to study that shunned subject.

Over the years, I have found that a great many of the debunkers in my lecture audiences had one thing in common: they had read one or more of the supposedly objective articles on UFOs which routinely appear in *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)—which has recently renamed itself the Committee for Skeptical Investigation (CS1).

Although most of the debunkers I encounter tout *Skeptical Inquirer* as a source of credible, scientific information on UFOs—which it is not—when I question them, I find that virtually none of these UFO critics know anything about those responsible for publishing this "skeptical" magazine. I, on the other hand, made it my business long ago to find out exactly who was so intent on fervently debunking UFOs, year after year, decade after decade. I must say, what I discovered surprised me. At the same time, I was not at all surprised.

As noted in an earlier chapter, the Executive Editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* is Kendrick C. Frazier. Many years ago, I discovered that Frazier was in fact employed—beginning in the early 1980s—as a Public Relations Specialist at Sandia National Laboratories, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Yes, the same Sandia Labs that has been instrumental to the success of America's nuclear weapons program since the late 1940s, through its "ordinance engineering" of components for bomb and missile warhead systems.

In my opinion, Frazier's affiliation with Sandia Labs—he recently retired after working there for over two decades—is highly significant, given the hundreds of references in declassified government documents, and in the many statements by former military personnel, which address ongoing UFO

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activity at nuclear weapons sites over the past six decades.

Considering these disclosures—which clearly establish a link between UFOs and nuclear weapons—I find it interesting, to say the least, that the longtime editor of the leading debunking magazine—whose pages routinely feature articles discrediting UFOs and those who report them—worked for over 20 years as a public relations spokesman for one of the leading nuclear weapons labs in the United States.

Interestingly, *Skeptical Inquirer's* publisher's statement, or "masthead", which appears at the beginning of each issue, never once mentioned Frazier's employment at the highly-secretive, government-funded laboratory. Instead, the magazine merely listed, and continues to list, his profession as "science writer"—a reference to his having written several books and articles on various scientific subjects. Also curious is the fact that various online biographies on Frazier—including one written by himself—also fail to mention his two-decade tenure at Sandia Labs.[21] An odd omission indeed.

Over the years, Frazier has been quick to dismiss the astonishing revelations about UFOs contained in government documents declassified via the Freedom of Information Act. He claims that researchers who have accessed thousands of U.S. Air Force, CIA, and FBI files have consistently misrepresented their contents. In one interview he stated, "The UFO believers don't give you a clear and true idea of what these government documents reveal. They exaggerate the idea that there is a big UFO cover- up."[22]

Just as Frazier strives to minimize the significance of the declassified revelations about UFOs, it is likely he will also attempt to downplay tin relevancy of his former employment with one of the U.S. government's top nuclear weapons labs, as it pertained to his magazine's relentless debunking of UFOs. He will presumably assert that his skeptical views on the subject are personal and sincere, and were in no way related to, or influenced by. his public relations position at Sandia National Laboratories.

However, regardless of his response, I believe that Frazier's long-term employment at Sandia is very relevant, and raises questions about his impartiality, if nothing else, given his long track-record of publishing stridently anti-UFO articles in *Skeptical Inquirer*.

One such article, an attempted debunking of the Big Sur UFO Incident, was

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earlier discussed at length. As noted, two former U.S. Air Force officers have unequivocally stated that, during a 1964 weapon systems test, a UFO disabled an experimental dummy nuclear warhead in mid-flight as it raced downrange toward its intended target. My own well-documented investigation of the dramatic incident has now thoroughly discredited the factually-inaccurate article by Kingston A. George featured earlier in *Skeptical Inquirer*. If one compares the first-person accounts provided by the two former Air Force officers with the badly-flawed, highly-misleading synopsis of the incident published by Sandia Labs PR Specialist Frazier, one might reasonably ask whether a cover-up of sorts—a disinformation scheme—was behind the debunking article. But the reader may judge for him- or herself.

Furthermore, the CSICOP-Nukes Connection does not end with Kendrick Frazier. James Oberg, one of CSICOP's leading UFO debunkers, once did classified work relating to nuclear weapons at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory, located on Kirtland AFB, less than a mile from Sandia Labs. From 1970-72, Oberg was an Air Force officer whose assignments with the Battle Environments Branch at the weapons lab involved the development and utilization of computer codes related to the modeling of laser and nuclear weapons—according to one of Oberg's own online resumes.[23]

Oberg had also been a "Security Officer" while at the weapons lab, meaning that he was responsible for monitoring the security procedures used to safeguard the classified documents generated by his group. As we will see in the chapter on the Big Sur UFO Incident, Oberg once privately chastised Dr. Bob Jacobs—one of the former Air Force officers who leaked the amazing story—for releasing "top secret" information relating to the case. Once a security officer, always a security officer, I guess.

I first became aware of Oberg's "skeptical" stance on UFOs after he wrote an article for the December 1978 issue of *OMNI* magazine, in a column called "UFO Update". A superficial review of Oberg's comments in that article might lend the impression that he was even-handedly covering the UFO controversy. Far from it. A closer examination reveals Oberg's subtle but persistent use of anti-UFO propaganda, not to mention his failure to identify himself to *OMNI's* readers as an active-duty Air Force officer.

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Fortunately, these tactics and omissions did not go unnoticed. In the following issue of OMNI, in a letter to the editor, Robert Barrow wrote "C'mon James Oberg. If you plan to continue writing your skeptical UFO articles under the guise of proper scientific literature, please be fair. First the *OMNI* readership should be aware that not only are you working with NASA but you are a U.S. Air Force officer in fine standing as well. In fact while I knew you as Captain Oberg, I shouldn't doubt you are now Major Oberg. As a former USAF staff sergeant, I can appreciate that and wish to congratulate you if you have achieved a higher rank...Your consistently skeptical articles are probably making some of your superiors far happier than anything you might write to the contrary..."[24]

Not surprisingly, Oberg's published response to Barrow's letter rejected the inference that he was writing skeptical articles about UFOs to please his superiors. He wrote, "… I don't have any idea what my Air Force superiors think about my UFO activity, since I have never had any directives, one way or another. It's easy to reject any unwelcome opinions as part of a 'government plot', and you're welcomed to that paranoia if it suits you. It also is a direct smear on my honesty and motives..."[25]

Well, first, Barrow did not say that Oberg was a part of any government plot. He was merely pointing out that, given the longstanding controversy over the U.S. Air Force's handing of the UFO problem, Oberg should have candidly acknowledged his affiliation with the Air Force in his *OMNI* article —in which he debunked UFOs, exactly as the Air Force had for decades. As such, Barrow's comment was a perfectly valid criticism. I might also note here that Oberg's failure to inform *OMNI's* readers about his active-duty military status—until after it had been exposed by Barrow—is reminiscent of Kendrick Frazer's own failure to inform *Skeptical Inquirer's* readers of his two-decade-long affiliation with the U.S. government's nuclear weapons program—in the magazine's masthead, which appears in each issue—at the same time he was publishing article after article debunking UFOs, including at least one highly important sighting directly related to nuclear weapons.

Moreover, Oberg's indignation over being "smeared" by Barrow is laughable, given his own countless public attacks on UFO proponents over the years, in which he frequently questions the sincerity and motives of those who report or investigate UFOs.

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In another letter responding to Oberg's article, journalist Terry Hansen, wrote, "How sad to see such a poor article on UFOs in *OMNI's* first issue. James Oberg is certainly [not an objective] authority on the subject. His article tries to come across as unbiased, but even someone with a superficial knowledge of the issue can see that it is laced with distortion and innuendo… If 'UFO Update' is representative of the type of coverage controversial issues will receive in the future, then *OMNI* has little to offer a questioning mind."[26]

Years later, Hansen later went on to write an excellent book entitled, *The Missing Times: News Media Complicity in the UFO Cover-up*, which I highly recommend to anyone wishing to better understand how the type of information contained in my own book could have been successfully kept from the American people—scientists and laypersons alike—for so long.[27] In fact, I put Hansen's book on my short list of "must-reads" as far as the official government cover-up of UFOs is concerned.

Regarding CSICOP, Hansen examines the possibility that the skeptical organization was infiltrated early on by a small but determined group of U.S. government-affiliated operatives, whose true motives have far more to do with disinformation than skepticism. He writes, "[The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal] is an organization of people who oppose what they contend is pseudo-science… CSICOP, contrary to its impressive-sounding title, does not sponsor scientific research. On the contrary, it's main function has been to oppose scientific research, especially in areas such as psychic phenomena and UFOs, two topics that, coincidentally or not, have been of demonstrated interest to the U.S. intelligence community over the decades. Instead, CSICOP devotes nearly all of its resources to influencing the American public via the mass media."[28]

Hansen continues, "CSICOP can accurately be described as a propaganda organization because it does not take anything approaching an objective position regarding UFOs. The organization's stance is militantly anti-UFO research and it works hard to see that the news media broadcast its views whenever possible. When the subject of UFOs surfaces, either in the news media or any other public forum, CSICOP members turn out rapidly to add their own spin to whatever is being said. Through its "Council for Media Integrity" CSICOP maintains close ties with the editorial staffs of such

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influential science publications as *Scientific American*, *Nature*, and *New Scientist*. Consequently, it's not too hard to understand why balanced UFO articles seldom appear in those [magazines]."[29]

Hansen further notes, "CSICOP's public stance on UFOs is best personified by [the late] Philip J. Klass, head of the organization's UFO Subcommittee. Klass isn't a scientist. In fact, his education is in electrical engineering. After graduation from Iowa State University in 1941, he went to work for the avionics division of General Electric, one of the nation's largest weapons and nuclear energy contractors. In 1952, Klass joined the aerospace trade publication *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, where he has often written about 'black budget' military projects such as those covertly funded by the CIA… Over the decades, Klass has made a name for himself publicly sparring with UFO researchers and injecting his particular spin on UFOs into the mass media at every opportunity, not always accurately or with much scientific merit… Despite his lack of scientific credentials, Klass has enjoyed remarkable popularity with the news media."[30]

Hansen might have added that Klass' long-time employer, *Aviation Week & Space Technology* magazine, has a remarkable track-record of scooping its competition by publishing articles based, in part, on information provided by government insiders. Indeed, *Aviation Week* may be considered as a conduit to the public for information originating from many of the key players in the aptly-named military/industrial complex.

To illustrate the rather cozy relationship between the magazine and the intelligence community, in particular, I earlier noted that Klass once boasted in a private letter that he could cite as character references both Admiral Bobby R. Inman (USN Ret.)—the former Director of the National Security Agency, who also held Deputy Director positions at both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency—and Lt. General Daniel O. Graham (USA Ret.), the former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and former Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. In the letter, Klass stated that "Both men have worked with me and gotten to know me [through] my efforts for *Aviation Week*."[31]

Hansen, whose diligent journalistic investigation of CSICOP goes well beyond that conducted by any UFO researcher, observes, "If the [CIA] had

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wanted to set up a front organization to debunk the UFO phenomenon, it could have hardly done a better job than to infiltrate CSICOP and encourage its media management activities. Perhaps it' not surprising, then, that Philip Klass has occasionally been charged with being a covert government agent, a charge he has vigorously denied..."[32]

Hansen goes on to note that during a 1994 confrontation with Klass, at a CSICOP meeting in Seattle, the UFO debunker first said that an official UFO cover-up would not be possible because the U.S. government could not keep such an important secret. When Hansen challenged that assertion, and cited examples of other important secrets which the government had successfully kept from public view—such as decades-old cryptographic-related programs —Klass apparently reversed himself and admitted that some secrets could indeed be kept long-term. Then, in what was arguably a very telling comment, Klass told Hansen that some secrets should be kept, for reasons relating to national security. He went on to mention that his employer, *Aviation Week*, had once agreed to keep secret its knowledge of the SR-71 spy plane, at the government's request. If nothing else, this admission by Klass only further illustrates the magazine's cooperative, mutually-beneficial relationship with the various agencies and departments of the U.S. government—in which one hand washes the other, so to speak.

"So," Hanson summarized, "under cross-examination, Klass had gone from claiming the government can't keep secrets to saying that it can, it must, and even that his own publication had been complicit in keeping government secrets. Klass did not appear very happy about the course this conversation had taken and he soon reverted back to his [initial] claim that UFOs did not exist… A charitable view of Klass is that he is simply a zealot, another of those for whom scientific dogma supplies the reassuring psychological bedrock that others find in religious fundamentalism. When confronted with evidence that calls into question his core beliefs, Klass responds—as any fundamentalist would—by rejecting the evidence. Thus, his duplicity can be accounted for by human nature. One does not need to resort to more conspiratorial explanations."[33]

"On the other hand," Hanson continued, "Klass also has many of the qualifications one would expect in a deep-cover propagandist. He has a history of working for the secretive military-industrial complex, a

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demonstrated aptitude for duplicity, a District of Columbia address, remarkable mass-media savvy and success, an evident belief in the necessity of government secrecy and, of course, cover as a journalist with *Aviation Week*."[34]

Hanson has much more to say in his book regarding the U.S. government's routine use of the mass media to spin or suppress information it wishes to keep from the public. *The Missing Times* is a remarkably well-documented expose and should be read by UFO proponents, skeptics and debunkers alike, not to mention any American citizen who has ever suspected that the news offered by the national media—the "free press"—is not always what it appears to be.

My own opinion regarding CSICOP (or, now, CSI) is that if one is going to accept at face-value the many unfounded and dismissive claims about UFOs made by some of the key members of this "skeptical" organization, one should at least be aware of those persons' longstanding professional affiliations with the U.S. government or government- influenced publications. To summarize:

Kendrick Frazier: Employed as a Public Relations Specialist, for more than two decades, at Sandia National Laboratories, one of the U.S. governments leading nuclear weapons labs. During the same period, Frazier served as Executive Editor for *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, a position he continues to hold today.

James Oberg: A former U.S. Air Force officer who once did classified work related to nuclear weapons, and a long-time employee of NASA. Before his retirement, Oberg worked on the Space Shuttle program (1975- 97): he currently serves as a space science consultant for NBC News and continues to promote his anti-UFO position.

Philip Klass: Now deceased, Klass was employed, for over two decades, at a U.S. intelligence community-friendly aerospace publication. By his own admission, Klass had developed close professional ties with at least two top-level intelligence officers—U.S. Navy Admiral Bobby Inman and U.S. Army General Daniel Graham—both of whom held, at various times, high-ranking positions with the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and/or the National Security Agency.

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Well, call me paranoid, but I think I see a pattern here. For an organization ostensibly created to scientifically investigate paranormal subjects, including UFOs, CSICOP—especially its UFO Subcommittee—seems to be completely lacking in UFO experts with truly scientific credentials, but is conspicuously top-heavy with individuals having U.S. government connections, of one kind or another. The reader may draw his or her own conclusions but, personally, I believe that one would be well-advised to assiduously avoid the highly-suspect spin regularly offered up by the UFO "experts" at CSICOP/CSI and, instead, consult other, genuine sources of scientifically-credible information on UFOs.

Let me be clear: I am not accusing the leading UFO debunkers affiliated with CSICOP/CSI and its publication *Skeptical Inquirer* of being government-sanctioned covert agents, or even UFO cover-up sympathizers —"assets" in intelligence parlance—who have engaged in disinformation campaign designed to discredit UFOs, as well as those who report or investigate them. The reason I am not accusing them is because I have no proof to back up my personal mistrust of their motives.

However, having said that, I do make the observation that most of CSICOP's leading UFO debunkers—that is, those who have served as members of the organizations staff—share a very interesting and, I would argue, rather suspicious camaraderie relating to their professional backgrounds.

For whatever reason, these individuals are intent on claiming that there are no UFOs and, therefore, no U.S. government cover-up of them. In view of their rather interesting affiliations, I merely ask: Wouldn't Kendrick Frazier's statements be more credible had he not spent his career doing public relations work for the U.S. government's nuclear weapons program? Shouldn't Philip Klass—having worked for more than two decades as a journalist for one of the U.S. intelligence community's most valued media conduits—been more carefully scrutinized by the media, for a conflict of interest, when he tirelessly insisted that there is no government UFO cover-up? Even James Oberg's own classified nuclear weapons- related work while with the Air Force, as well as his later involvement with the U.S. government's space program, seems to fit this pattern of direct or indirect governmental ties on the part of those who ostensibly dismiss UFOs on purely scientific grounds,

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but who seem arguably more intent on dismissing the notion that there is an official UFO cover-up.

(Yes, admittedly, almost all of my own sources have military backgrounds too. Importantly, however, unlike the highly-vocal UFO debunkers at CSICOP, most of them have divulged their UFO-related secrets only reluctantly, when pressed by myself or other researchers to do so. Therefore, as a rule, they have very cautiously presented their insiders' perspective on national security-related UFO activity. This is, of course, entirely dissimilar in approach to the relentless, high-profile, anti-UFO public relations campaign undertaken by CSICOP's debunkers over the years. I might also add that my own ex-military sources present their accounts in a simple, straightforward manner—-and rarely insist that anyone believe them—whereas, in my view, the ongoing UFO-debunking pronouncements by the CSI-COPs are routinely jam-packed with classic propaganda devices, obviously designed to influence public opinion.)

In any event, the question being asked here is whether or not CSICOP/ CSI has had within its ranks a few persons who have a hidden agenda on UFOs, which has nothing to do with genuine scientific skepticism. While I don't know the answer to this question, given the extreme, *unscientific* anti-UFO track-record of the organization, I think it needs to be asked. Regardless, whatever these debunkers' affiliations and motives may be, the reader doesn't need what they have to offer unless, of course, you actually enjoy being misled by pseudoscientific propaganda, government-inspired or not.

It goes without saying that the statements above do not apply to the CSICOP/CSI membership in general. It's only natural and to be expected that an organization which bills itself as "skeptical" in orientation will attract persons with a similar philosophical outlook. CSICOP/CSI counts among its membership many world-renowned scientists and other respected intellectuals. There is no question that a great many of these persons share a sincerely incredulous outlook on various subjects classified as "paranormal", including UFOs.

Therefore, the fact that many of CSICOP's members have rejected the validity of the UFO phenomenon—a subject about which they know little or nothing, and are not qualified to discuss authoritatively—certainly does not

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mean that they are secretly working for the CIA. Bias and presumption, rather than ulterior motives, account for these self-appointed UFO experts' flawed perspective on the phenomenon. Consequently, if they have been misled by CSICOP's top UFO debunkers, they have no one to blame but themselves.

I'll conclude this chapter by simply saying that if one is sincerely seeking an objective, unbiased scientific assessment of the UFO phenomenon, one should bypass the sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious misinformation foisted on us all by Klass, Oberg, Frazier, and other debunkers affiliated with CSICOP/CSI. Instead, one would do well to read anything ever written on the subject by Dr. James McDonald or Dr. J. Allen Hynek—at least, anything written by Hynek during his post-Project Blue Book period, when his scientific investigation of UFOs was not hampered by the official restrictions under which he labored while affiliated with the U.S. Air Force.

Perhaps I am being overly optimistic but, who knows, once acquainted with some legitimate data on the UFO phenomenon—including that gathered decades ago by McDonald and Hynek—a few of the daring scientific skeptics reading this book might actually begin practicing their profession, when addressing the subject of UFOs, instead of just offering lip service to that practice.

But now back to the real action—in the nuclear missile fields, of course.

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14. Launch in Progress!

Of all the interviews I've conducted with former or retired ICBM launch officers over the past three decades, this was perhaps the most disturbing. According to the source, David H. Schuur, a UFO had apparently activated the launch sequence in most of his Minuteman missiles.

In August 2007, Schuur told me, "I saw your request for information in the [June 2007] *Association of Air Force Missileers Newsletter*. I was involved in a UFO incident at Minot AFB in the mid-1960s. I had read your earlier article [in the September 2002 *AAFM Newsletter*] but was hesitant to respond." I asked Schuur why he had been hesitant. He replied, "Well, we were basically told, way back when, that it was classified information and, you know, it didn't happen and don't discuss it. I guess I was still operating on that idea when I saw your first article."

Schuur had obviously had a change of heart. He continued, "Anyway, I was a Minuteman missile crewmember in the 455th/91st Strategic Missile Wing at Minot from December 1963 through November 1967. I was a 1st Lieutenant during that period and the deputy commander that night. Since the incident occurred some 40 years ago, my memories are a bit foggy but, based on who my commander was at the time, I would say it occurred between July 1965 and July 1967."

I asked Schuur if he could narrow the time-frame during which the incident occurred, by associating it with another event. He replied, "Not really, but my sense is that the incident occurred toward the end of my duty in the [missile] field, so it was probably during 1966, or '67. I was pulling alert in the Echo [Launch Control] Capsule and was at the console at the time, probably early in the morning when the commander was sleeping. I know I was at Echo because that's where I pulled almost all of my alert duty. My crew commander at the time has died. He was a Lieutenant Colonel at Minot, in his 50s—he was in the reserves, an old Korea veteran, who was recalled to duty in the early 1960s.

"As far as the incident, here's my best recollection of it: Alpha capsule, which was east of us, reported on PAS—the Primary Alerting System—that

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their security personnel were observing a large, bright object hovering over some of their missile sites. It was moving from missile to missile. I think the Alpha missile crew also reported that they were receiving 'spurious indicators' on their missile control console, but I'm not certain about that. I do know that a few minutes later our own capsule had spurious indicators—anomalous readings—from some of our missiles."

I asked Schuur to explain PAS. He said, "It was an open line between SAC headquarters and the wing command posts. There was a speaker in each launch capsule and when the command posts issued a directive, or whatever, we were able to hear it. When Alpha had their UFO sightings, they alerted the command post, at which time the command post called SAC headquarters. So, when the report of the sightings went out, we all heard it on PAS."

Schuur continued, "But it wasn't just Alpha and Echo. Over the next hour or so—I don't recall exactly how long it was—all of the (lights reported that their [Security Alert Teams] were observing a UFO near their facilities. The path of the object could be followed as it passed over each flight area by the reports on the PAS. The object moved over the entire wing from the southeast to the northwest, following the layout of the wing."

Schuur elaborated, "All of them—Bravo Flight, Charlie, Delta, right on down the line to Oscar—were reporting sightings of this object. Minot's missile field is laid out like the letter 'C'. Alpha is located southeast of the base, and the other flights—Bravo, Charlie and so forth—were south, southwest, west, northwest, then north of Minot. Oscar, the last flight, is at the top of the 'C', north of the base. The object—as far as I know, it was only one object—came across Alpha Flight, then moved all the way around the flights and ended up at Oscar. We could hear that on PAS. At Echo, it didn't come close to the Launch Control Facility, it just visited the LFs (silos), then passed onto the next flight."

"As far as our flight, Echo, a few minutes after hearing the report from Alpha, I received a call from topside security that a large bright light—actually, a large, bright object would be more accurate—was in the sky, to the east of the launch control facility. When the guard called down, he may have used the term 'UFO' but I don't recall. He didn't describe it's shape or

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altitude because it was too far away. It never got close enough the LCF to see any detail. At its closest, it was two, three, maybe four miles away from us, near one of the missile sites."

Schuur continued, “However, when the object passed over our Right, we started receiving many spurious indications on our console. The object was apparently sending some kind of signals into each missile. Not every missile got checked [out] by the object, but there were several that did. Maybe six, seven, or eight. Maybe all ten got checked, but I don’t think so. As this thing was passing over each missile site, we would start getting erratic indications on that particular missile. After a few seconds, everything reset back to normal. But then the next missile showed spurious indicators, so the object had apparently moved on to that one, and did the same thing to it. Then on to the next one, and so on. It was as if the object was scanning each missile, one by one. The Inner Security and Outer Security [alarms were triggered] but we got those all the time, for one reason or another. However, on this particular night, we had to activate the ‘Inhibit’ switch because we got ‘Launch in Progress' indicators! After a few minutes, the UFO passed to the northwest of us and all indicators reset to normal.”

I wanted to be certain about what I had just been told. I asked Schuur, “So, if you get a Launch in Progress indicator, docs that mean the launch sequence has been triggered—that the missile is preparing to launch?" Schuur replied, “That means the missile has received a launch signal. When that happens, we get an indication in the capsule that a launch command has been received by that missile. If that happens, without proper authority, you flip what’s called an “Inhibit” switch, to delay the launch for a given period of time. If an Inhibit command comes in from another launch capsule, that shuts down the launch totally. But if that second command doesn’t come in, the missile will wait for a specified period of time and then launch automatically at the end of that expired period—theoretically. Of course, that night, we had all kinds of other indicators coming on from each missile so, in that situation, the launch probably would have aborted itself. I honestly don’t know."

I asked Schuur if the Launch in Progress indicator had ever been triggered on any other occasion, either before or after the UFO incident, while he was on alert duty. He replied, “No, never.”

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I asked Schuur if he had heard about missile maintenance teams having to replace components or whole systems in the affected missiles—the ones that generated the spurious readings. He replied, “No, if that happened, I never heard about it.”

Schuur said, “Upon returning to the base the next day, my commander and I were met by the operations officer. He just said, 'Nothing happened, nothing to discuss, goodbye.’ Our logs and tapes were turned in. Every capsule had a 24-hour tape that, as I recall, recorded the communications that went over the PAS system, so all the reports would have been on that tape. But we were essentially told that nothing had happened that night and to discuss it no further. It was a non-event. We were never debriefed, by OSI or anyone else. We just went home. Most of the returning missile crews drove back to the base from their facilities, so they all arrived at different times. There was no group debriefing that I know of. I never heard another thing about the incident.”

I asked Schuur, “I know that you were given no feedback from your superiors, but what is your personal assessment of the event?” He replied, “Oh, I think something was up there, uh, scanning the missiles, seeing what was going on. Some kind of a scanning process.” I asked Schuur whether he thought the launch activation had been incidental or deliberate. He seemed surprised by my question and said, “I think that the scanning just set it off. It set all kinds of things off, we were getting all sorts of indicators. There were some kind of signals being sent [from the UFO] to the missile that inadvertently triggered the launch activation, but I don’t think it was deliberate. I hope not! That would have been—.” Schuur didn’t finish this sentence. His voice broke and he heaved a deep sigh. Apparently, the thought that those aboard the UFO might have deliberately attempted to launch his nuclear missiles that night had caused him to pause—and probably shudder—over 40 years later.

I obviously accept Schuur’s report as credible, but am of course attempting to locate other former members of his squadron who are- willing to corroborate it. As Schuur candidly admitted, after reading my first article in the September 2002 AAFM newsletter, he waited some five years before approaching me. It was only after my second published request for information from former/retired USAF missileers, that he decided to

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unburden himself. This hesitant response is not atypical. Many of my former missile launch officer sources have not readily or easily divulged their UFO experiences to me, for one reason or another.

Importantly, to my knowledge, Schuur's testimony represents the only credible report on record of a UFO temporarily activating a U.S. nuclear missile. However, there is one other reliable report of such an activation—in the Soviet Union. That case will be discussed at length in a later chapter.

F.E. Warren Again

In the late 1960s, an incident similar to that reported by David Schuur—but far less ominous—apparently occurred at F.E. Warren AFB, in Wyoming,. During a telephone interview, former Minuteman missile launch officer Larry Johnson told me, "After I got to [F.E.] Warren, I heard talk about UFO sightings going on before I got there, but I can't tell you when those occurred. I only had one UFO experience. I can't give you any idea of the exact date, or time of day, but I think it would have been in 1967 or '68. I was a [Missile] Combat Crew Commander, a captain, at India Flight, I think, and I remember one night when there were a lot of discussions going on over the launch capsule telephone network—I don't recall it's proper name—about people seeing UFOs and lights in the sky, and so forth.

On that night, the UFO—one of them anyway, there could have been more than one—was supposedly moving towards us from the direction of another Launch Control Capsule. After a period of time, my people upstairs—my Strike Team, the Security Alert Team—saw it coming, so I dispatched them to the field. They were already looking for it because they heard about it on their own radios. They followed it but were never able to catch it. The light seemed to stay just ahead of them. When they would get close enough to be able to sec any detail—you know, the shape of the aircraft surrounding the light—it would accelerate and leave them behind. But it was a bright light, low to the ground, no noise. They followed it for, oh, ten or fifteen minutes and, finally, it accelerated even faster and left my area and went into another [missile flight's] area.

Then that LCC began tracking it—we could hear that on the radio. It flew close to that site too. Actually, that went on for awhile. The light moved from

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squadron to squadron to squadron—toward the LCCs each squadron controlled—and then finally moved away from the missile field. But there was no evidence of hostility [from the UFO] and nothing that caused any alarm, except the concern of 'What do we have here? What is this?'

The Strike Team was never able to establish more than it was a light source. They could never see any kind of aircraft around it. It was just an eerie light. But they said it wasn't a helicopter and it wasn't an airplane. It was something else, I don't know what. Whatever it was, flew in a straight line, no maneuvers really, from the other LCC to my LCC, and then on out of my area. I called the Command Post and reported the incident. I don't remember what they said, bur I knew I wasn't the only one reporting the UFO. I was never debriefed by OSI."

I asked Johnson whether he had heard anything on the LCC's telephone, or the Primary Alert System, about missiles being activated, or dropping off alert status during the incident. He said, "No, I never heard anything about that."

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15. “Someone is seeing flying saucers again.”

During the pre-dawn hours of October 24, 1968, a UFO was tracked at Minot AFB—both by the base’s weather radar, as well as onboard a B-52 Stratofortress bomber preparing to land at the base. Significantly, this simultaneous tracking occurred during the same period of time when USAF missile security teams and missile maintenance teams were reporting UFOs maneuvering near Minuteman missile Launch Facilities (LFs) 0-6 and N-7.

Over a five year-period, researchers Tom Tulien and Jim Klorz painstakingly investigated the events which occurred at Minot that early morning in 1968, interviewing many eyewitnesses and reviewing numerous declassified USAF files and radarscope photographs. In fact, this case is so spectacular and so well-documented, ABC Television chose to include a detailed discussion of it in its February 2005 two-hour special, *UFOs: Seeing is Believing*, hosted by the late Peter Jennings.

Tulien notes for the record, “The contents of the National Archives and Records Administration’s (NARA) USAF Project Blue Book microfilm file regarding the Minot incident (case number 12,548), consists of over 130 pages dated from 24 October 1968 to 14 November 1968.” While the final report on the Tulien/Klotz investigation is nearing completion, the basic facts of the case—-as summarized in declassified Project Blue Book files, and in witness testimony—are as follows:

On 24 October 1968, at 2:15 a.m., 14 miles east-northeast of N- 7, a missile security camper team posted at LF 0-6 notified the Flight Security Controller (FSC) at the Oscar Flight Launch Control Facility that they were observing a UFO near their position. The camper team reported that, from their vantage point, the UFO had disappeared behind some trees. At the time, a missile targeting team was at work at 0-6. Immediately after being notified of the situation by the FSC, the Combat Targeting Commander ordered his team to abort their work, secure the LF, and return to base.

At 2:30 a.m., two missile technicians assigned to the 91st Missile Maintenance Squadron (MIMS), Airmen 1st Class Lloyd Isley and Robert O’Connor, reported observing a strange light in the eastern sky while

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traveling to Minuteman Launch Facility N-7 for a routine procedure. Based on the documentation it appears as though it was the same UFO sighted earlier at 0-6. Based on reports he was receiving from the maintenance team, the Base Operations dispatcher noted this in his log at 3:00 a.m.: "object S/E of N-7 moving toward site with brilliant light like the sun. Lights flashing on and off. Its too brilliant and big for an aircraft now moving south and hovered over N-7 [my emphasis], turned green, amber off and on." O'Connor, later reported that the UFO "appeared self-luminous like a big ball of white light that seemed to change to a dim green light then later to a dim amber color."[1]

The maintenance team notified Transportation Control and Base Operations, then radioed the FSC upon entering the site, at which point they reported the UFO to him. Eventually, both the FSC and his two-man Security Alert Team observed the UFO from their positions at the November Launch Control Facility. All of the observers—both maintenance and security personnel—reported that the UFO was extremely bright and had the ability to hover, as well as to move abruptly at great velocity.

Sgt. Bond hastily dispatched the SAT team to N-7. While en route, both men reported that a second UFO had appeared east of their position and then flew toward the first object, which was still located near the LF. After maneuvering near each other in the sky for a brief period, one of the UFOs suddenly disappeared.

In his report, researcher Tulien states, "During the period [that the November Flight SAT team was] on the road, the Wing Security Controller noted in his summary that between 3:20 and 3:25 a.m. 'SSgt Smith at Oscar I saw the object separate in two parts and go in opposite directions and return and pass under each other. At this time Juliet Flight and Mike Flight Team observed the same things and described it in the same way.'"[2]

While these startling events were unfolding, the pilot of a B-s'- returning to Minot after a 10-hour training mission received a radio call from the base's Radar Approach Control (RAPCON) center, asking him to look for any unusual "orange glows" from his position. According to the declassified transcript of the radio conversation, the RAPCON controller told the bomber's pilot and co-pilot, "Someone is seeing flying saucers again."[3]

He then told them where to look. Shortly thereafter, RAPCON was

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informed that the base's weather radar was tracking the object near Bowbells, ND, about 38 nautical miles northwest of the base.

Suddenly, that UFO flew toward the B-52, and began pacing it at a distance of one mile. The aircraft's own radar was already tracking the object and recorded these maneuvers. The navigator, Major Patrick McCaslin, said that the UFO's radar return was "as big or bigger than a KC-135 [tanker]."[4]

Radar Navigator Major Chuck Ritchey quickly activated the aircraft's radarscope camera and the object's radar return was captured on film. Later that morning, the images were evaluated by one of the 5th Bombardment Wing's intelligence officers, Richard Clark, who recalls that he computed the UFO's mean velocity at 3900 mph. This estimate was based on the fact that the UFO had covered two miles during one, three-second sweep of the radar. He told Tulien, "It had to be something other than what we were aware of, you know, and I didn't think our technology had anything like that as far as capability—so it's got to be a UFO."[5]

As the UFO began to pace the B-52, the aircraft's two UHF radios were apparently impacted by its presence, and normal outgoing radio transmissions were temporarily interrupted. However, the aircraft's UHF receiver was unaffected and the crew continued to hear instructions from the RAPCON controller. The UFO paced the aircraft for approximately 20 miles, at which point it broke-off and moved away. As soon as it did so, and disappeared from the bomber's radar, the aircraft's transmitters resumed normal functioning.

As the B-52 began its final approach to Minot, it was unexpectedly diverted, on the orders of an unidentified "general officer." RAPCON provided the pilot vectors for the UFO—which was by then on, or hovering near, the ground—and told to turn the aircraft and fly directly over it.

Tulien and Klotz have interviewed the aircraft's co-pilot, Captain Bradford Runyon, and the Instructor Pilot, Major James Partin, both of whom provided detailed accounts regarding the UFO's appearance.

Partin noted that he first saw an orange object on or just above the ground and stated that it appeared "like a miniature sun placed on the ground below the aircraft." As the aircraft closed on the UFO, the object's shape became more visible. Partin said, "It was sort of oblong, there were—looked like

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windows around it that were lit, and it was just hovering there."[6]

Captain Runyon later drew a picture of the UFO, showing an ova|. shaped object with a tubular limb extending from one end. Beyond the other end of the tube was a crescent-shaped spray of illumination. He stated, "My first impression was that the orange [oval] portion was bigger than a large barn and the tubular section reminded me of a large grain silo lying on its side. The crescent-shaped part did not become clear until we rolled into the first 90-degree turn...I'm not good at estimating dimensions, especially 32 years after the fact, but to my best guess, I would say it was at least 200 ft in length and 100 ft in width and 50 ft. in height."[7]

Navigator Patrick McCaslin, who did not see the object himself, added, "The description [given] to me [by one of the pilots] was that it was an elliptical shape—kind of a cough drop-shaped thing, glowing orange with a boomerang exhaust, or boomerang-shaped exhaust or whatever—a florescence off one end."[8]

As the B-52 neared the UFO, its UHF transmitters were impacted once again. Upon landing, one of the crew was debriefed about the incident, but there was no further discussion among the crew until years later.

What was the Air Force's official verdict on these events? On November 13, 1968, three weeks after the UFO incidents. Project Blue Book chief Major Hector Quintanilla issued an official statement about them. He wrote, "The following conclusions have been reached after a thorough study of the data submitted to Foreign Technology Division. The ground visual sightings appear to be of the star Sirius and the B-52, which was flying in the area. The B-52 radar contact and the temporary loss of the UHF transmission could be attributed to a plasma similar to ball lightning. The air visual from the B-52 could be the star Vega, which was on the horizon at the time, or it could be a light on the ground, or possibly a plasma. No further investigation by the Foreign Technology Division is contemplated."[9]

This highly implausible official explanation for the UFO incidents at Minot AFB was reminiscent of Quinanilla's earlier verdict on the August 1, 1965 UFO sightings at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming. In that case, several Air Force SAT teams had independently observed, over a three hour-period, as many as nine UFOs maneuvering near and hovering over various Minuteman missile

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sites. The Blue Book chief concluded that the teams had not seen UFOs, but twinkling stars.

More UFOs at Minot AFB in 1967-68

In 2005, I posted a series of messages on the Yahoo missile_talk group's bulletin board, summarizing the testimony of former and retired USAF sources who had reported their UFO-related experiences at various nuclear missile sites over the years. My hope was that some of the Yahoo group's members, largely made up of U.S. Air Force missileers, would be encouraged to come forth and discuss their own experiences. A few members of the group, including Larry Manross, did just that. He wrote,

Robert, You are right on. As a launch crew commander at Minot AFB from 1966-1970, I will tell you that there were UFO incidents. In one incident [during which I was present] the security team upstairs went into a defensive posture with lights turned out. They had called in a UFO sighting to the base and radar was tracking it. All of a sudden it buzzed the launch control center and that was when they cut the lights and took a defensive position.

The details are fairly slim on the incident, [but it occurred sometime during] 1967 or '68. It was treated by the Air Force as a non-incident. In other words, no report was asked for from the missile crew. I am not certain if the security team made a report, but the whole thing made you feel somewhat uneasy.

At the time, I was a 1st Lieutenant and was the junior officer in the capsule. The security team kept us informed of their concerns. Especially the buzzing of the launch control center. Sitting downstairs you obviously didn't see a thing. I wish I had been upstairs when the incident took place, but as you know the launch crews were down in the capsules for 24 hour uninterrupted stretches. But base ops did confirm that they were tracking an unidentified object on radar.

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The number of UFO incidents at the time, during 1966-'70, were so frequent, that in the summer the security team sometimes would put chairs in front of the building, or on the roof of the building to watch for UFOs. Can you believe it?

Regarding this last statement, I told Manross that I had heard nearly identical stories from other former or retired USAF personnel who had been stationed at Ellsworth, EE. Warren, and Malmstrom AFBs during that era. This particular side show is almost humorous: Nuclear missile security guards, sitting outside Minuteman launch control facilities at night looking tor UFOs, because the objects appeared above the missile field so frequently! If only the American media had been given that story at the time. But, of course, like everything else relating to these classified incidents, almost no information leaked out to the press or public.

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16. Look Over Here, Not Over There!

The selective declassification of UFO-related information by the U.S. government has been routinely utilized for decades to steer public perception in a certain direction. It's commonly called "spin." The purpose of this propaganda tactic is to alter the actual story of official interest in the UFO phenomenon, so that it appears as if there exists only minimal concern, or none at all.

A case in point is the Air Forces closure of Project Blue Book in 1969. The project's termination, and the eventual declassification of its files in 1974-75, left the impression—as was intended—that the military had lost interest in UFOs and was making public the sum of its knowledge about them. In reality, other groups within the Air Force, and other agencies, had also routinely collected information on UFOs for decades, out of public view, especially in cases where the national security of the United States was potentially impacted.

For example, consider the dramatic information provided to Office of Special Investigations (OSI) agents by Bob Salas and the other missile launch officers at Malmstrom AFB, in March 1967, in the wake of the large-scale missile shutdown incidents. Did Blue Book staffers even know that OSI had interviewed at least four launch officers, all of whom reported apparent UFO-involvement in the missile malfunctions? If the declassified Blue Book files are any indication, they did not.

The same holds true for most of the other accounts presented in this book, provided not only by ex-Air Force personnel stationed at various SAC missile bases over the years, but also by various airmen, sailors and marines who participated in the atmospheric nuclear tests of the 1950s and early 1960s. Many of these UFO sighting witnesses report that they were subsequently questioned by an agent working for OSI or some other military or civilian intelligence group. As far as I am aware, none of the written reports relating to those interrogations have been declassified. Consequently, according to the official record—at least the version of it publicly available following the release of Blue Books files—the great majority of the incidents reported in

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this book never even happened.

(Researcher Jan Aldrich notes, "In [a] 1952 *LOOK* article, [then Project Blue Book chief] Ruppelt mentions a file of 63 cases of UFOs over nuclear installations, but such a file is not in currently-declassified Blue Book files.")

That missing file aside, one declassified Air Force document explicitly explains why Blue Book may not have routinely received national security-related UFO reports, including those at nuclear weapons sites. As I will explain shortly, it appears that Blue Book was not always in the loop for UFO reports initially investigated by OSI and other intelligence groups. Moreover, that same declassified document also makes clear that Air Force intelligence and counter-intelligence groups continued to be tasked with the collection of UFO data *after* Blue Book's closure, a practice which undoubtedly continues to the present day.

Actually, Blue Book's demise had been foreshadowed for years. After 1952, the project's image as an *investigative* group had rarely been more than a ruse, as a number of its former USAF and civilian members have now revealed. To be sure, military and civilian UFO sighting reports were still collected, but they were followed-up only infrequently. By the 1960s, Blue Book was chiefly and infamously known for its highly improbable explanations for this or that UFO sighting—as birds, balloons and swamp gas, to name a few supposed culprits—which were routinely ridiculed by the press and public alike.

Blue Book's tendency toward unconvincingly explaining away important, legitimate sightings is starkly illustrated by its official findings relating to two of the relatively few nuclear weapons-related reports it received. As previously mentioned, the hours-long, ostentatious UFO displays above F.E. Warren AFB's Minuteman missile sites, on August 1. 1965, were explained as the observation of twinkling stars. Three years later, at Minot AFB, when UFOs not only hovered above ICBM sites but also maneuvered near a B-52 bomber in the area, bright stars were once again trotted out by Blue Book to explain the sightings, augmented by the supposed presence of ball lightning, despite the fact the UFOs were tracked on radar. The true nature of the events at F.E. Warren and Minot, as revealed to researchers decades later by former or retired Air Force personnel, clearly demonstrate how inadequate, if not

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ludicrous. Blue Book's official findings were at the time.

As noted in earlier chapters, a Lt. Anspaugh at Wright-Patterson AFB had provided Blue Book staffers with a detailed telephone log relating to the presence of bona fide UFOs above F.E. Warrens missile sites, as reported by several missile security police and even the base commander. In the case of the sightings at Minot, multiple reports by security police and air traffic controllers were provided to Blue Book, summarizing obviously genuine UFO activity at that base on October 24, 1968. And yet, despite these credible data, the project's chief, Major Hector Quintanilla, chose to blithely dismiss the sighting reports at each base as having no merit. Whether Blue Book's official, negative findings in these cases resulted from simple incompetence or, on the other hand, some as-yet undocumented pressure applied by higher-ups remains unclear at present.

Regardless, over time. Blue Book—originally a genuine UFO investigations group—had morphed into a PR front, whose main activity seemed to be the downplaying of sightings, apparently in the hope of pacifying American citizens' concerns about the UFO phenomenon. More importantly, as subsequent releases of documents via the Freedom of Information Act have revealed, even during the Blue Book era, almost all of the national security-related UFO investigations were actually being conducted by certain Air Force Intelligence and Counterintelligence groups, including the U.S. Air Force Office of Intelligence (AFOIN) the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI). But, of course, the vast majority of the American public was completely unaware of these secretive inquiries at the time they were occurring.

Did this clever sleight-of-hand succeed? In many respects, it did. The media, from *The New York Times* to small town newspapers, uncritically accepted the Blue Book closure announcement at face value. According to thousands of newspaper reports, the Air Force's interest in UFOs was at an end, and that was that. The major television networks—there were only three at the time—also slavishly followed the official Air Force line, and nothing resembling investigative journalism, which might have uncovered the actual facts behind the headlines, was in evidence.

Meanwhile, members of the public who doubted the validity of the new

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official stance, many of whom had seen a UFO themselves, could do little more than grumble in frustration. After all, they had no access to the then still-classified documents—which would later verify a secret, ongoing government interest in UFOs—because it would be several more years before that information was released via the FOIA. On the other hand, millions of other Americans, swayed by the widespread press coverage surrounding Blue Book's closure, were taken in by the official deception, and those already dubious about the reality of UFOs felt satisfied that their skepticism had been vindicated.

Once, while lecturing at a college in Illinois in 1981, I witnessed first-hand the degree to which some otherwise intelligent, highly-educated UFO skeptics were capable of being duped by their government and their own biases. After the presentation, during the question and answer period, a physics professor stood up and, in a highly indignant tone, chastised me for my contention that the government was hiding information about UFOs. "When I read about your upcoming program in the newspaper", he said, "I called the Pentagon and talked to an Air Force spokesman who assured me that they no longer investigate UFOs!"

As titters of laughter rippled through the audience, the professor pressed on, his voice rising, obviously sincere in his belief that the Pentagon wouldn't mislead him, or the rest of us, about its interest in UFOs. He said that the PR spokesman had informed him that the Air Force closed its 22- year investigation of UFOs in 1969, after finding no evidence to suggest they really existed. (Actually, the official announcement claimed that there was no evidence that UFOs represented a direct threat to national security; it said nothing about their existence or non-existence.)

When the professor had finished, I calmly pointed out that I had earlier shown the audience a declassified Air Force document detailing an unsuccessful intercept of UFOs by jet fighters, immediately after several of the "disc" shaped craft had been observed maneuvering and hovering near nuclear missile sites outside Malmstrom AFB, Montana, in November 1975 —some six years after the Air Force supposedly lost interest in them. I then asked the professor whether he thought that such an incident would have been investigated, or ignored, by the Air Force. This brought more laughter from the audience. He waved his hand dismissively in my direction and did

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not respond. His mind was obviously made up and he didn't want to be confused by the facts.

Although it probably would have made no difference to this individual, or to millions of other Americans skeptical about the reality of UFOs, a now-declassified document provides insight into how the really important UFO reports were actually handled by the military.

The memorandum, dated October 20, 1969, and signed by Air Force General C.H. Bolender, the Air Force's Deputy Director of Development, was directed to all Air Force commands. While the memo did indeed suggest that Project Blue Book should be terminated, it then stated, "… reports of UFOs which could affect national security should continue to be handled through the standard Air Force procedure designed for this purpose."[2] General Bolender emphasized this point, adding, "Reports of unidentified flying objects which could affect national security are made in accordance with JANAP 146 or Air Force Manual 55-11, and are not part of the Blue Book system."[3] As researcher Barry Greenwood has noted, sixteen attachments which once accompanied the Bolender memorandum are no longer in Air Force files, at least according to the FOIA managers who responded to various requests for their release.

Regardless, the Bolender document confirms that the most important UFO cases—those potentially affecting national security—were never intentionally funneled to Project Blue Book in the first place, but were sent to other, less-publicized groups within the Air Force, which were *still* tasked with collecting and evaluating such reports after Blue Book's official and highly-touted closure.

It will be remembered that in my chapter on the Minuteman missile shutdown incidents at Echo and Oscar Flights, outside Malmstrom AFB, in March 1967, the Air Force—in response to an FOIA request filed by researcher Jim Klotz—declassified portions of the 341 st Strategic Missile Wing's history, as well as various engineering reports, one of which claimed that reports of UFOs from Air Force personnel in the missile field at the time of the Echo Flight shutdown had later been "disproved". Significantly, although a number of ex-USAF personnel have now discussed its occurrence, there is no official mention at all of the shutdown at Oscar Flight in the

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declassified files.

While the documents released to Klotz would seem to squelch any notion of UFO involvement in the shutdowns, the OSI reports relating to the debriefing of the launch officers who were involved in the incidents were not released, and their very existence has never been acknowledged by the Air Force. The release of the wing history and other reports was, in my view, most probably an attempt at spin, designed to refute the now- public testimony of the former or retired Air Force launch officers, and other missile personnel, who have confirmed a UFO involvement in the shutdown incidents. As the Air Force historian who wrote the 341st SMW history later admitted to Klotz, after he had learned about UFO sightings in the missile field and wrote about them, his superiors edited—that is, censored—the "UFO aspect" of his report. It was this edited version of events that was later declassified.

Although the U.S. Air Force had declassified all of the Project Blue Book files by 1975, including some number of previously unavailable OSl reports sent to the group, no OSI reports relating to the debriefing 0f the launch officers at Malmstrom in 1967—or other Air Force personnel involved in this or that nuclear missile-related UFO incident—were among them.

Indeed, as I will discuss in a later chapter, the most important documents relating to UFO sightings at ICBM sites and Weapons Storage Areas were actually *leaked* by a government insider, not voluntarily declassified by the Air Force. Their contents were obviously never meant for public scrutiny and the information in them would probably remain classified today had they not been released surreptitiously by an analyst working for the Defense Intelligence Agency. Clearly, given the often dramatic testimony contained in this book, the most sensitive intelligence information related to UFO activity at nuclear weapons sites is still classified and will undoubtedly remain so indefinitely.

Yet another example of the selective declassification of UFO-related information by the Air Force has been exposed by respected researcher Jan Aldrich who, in 2000, discovered a hitherto unknown Top Secret Air Force cable in the National Archives.

In an online article, Aldrich says,

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On the 4th of November 1948, U.S. Air Force, Europe (USAFE), Intelligence (A-2) sent a long Telecon (telephone conversation) Transcript (TT) to Headquarters, Air Force Director of Intelligence (DI) at the Pentagon. The cable contained a number of items on various Top Secret subjects. After the TT was delivered to the USAF Directorate of Intelligence, each item in the message was retyped as a separate file." Some of the items concerned the Air Force's great interest in reports of "flying saucers" in Europe, including one reference to an unknown object that had crashed into a lake in Sweden.[4]

In addition to divulging the contents of the cable, Aldrich cites the Top Secret document to make a larger point:

Copies of the USAFE cable were sent to the CIA and AMC (Air Materiel Command) at Wright Field. This is highly significant. While Ruppelt, Hynek and Fournet all said that the 1948 Top Secret Estimate of the Situation existed, no official confirmation has been found to support this claim. The USAFE cable indicates that Top Secret documents about UFOs did, in fact, exist at Wright Field and are not part of the current Project Blue Book files at the National Archives.[5]

Here, Aldrich is referring to the August 1948 Top Secret assessment on UFOs arrived at by Project Sign, the Air Force's first UFO investigations group. It concluded that "flying saucers" were interplanetary spaceships. This startling assessment was apparently later rejected by Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, ostensibly due to the lack of physical evidence to support it. I discuss this subject further in my chapter on Roswell. In any case, as Aldrich notes, although three key individuals—Blue Book chief Captain Edward Ruppelt, Blue Book consultant Dr. J. Allen Hynek, and the Pentagon's liaison with Blue Book, Major Dewey Fournet—all publicly revealed the conclusions found in the Top Secret document, the Air Force has never confirmed its existence, let alone declassified it. Aldrich continues.

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When Sydney Shallet was writing his two-part article on flying saucers for the Saturday Evening Post, he received permission from the Air Force to visit Wright Field to gather material. Prior to his arrival, Mr. Stephen Leo, of the Secretary of the Air Force Public Information Office, sent a letter to Wright Field requesting that Shallet be given access only to Secret information on flying saucers. Shallet was not to be permitted to see any Top Secret material on the subject. One could say this was just the standard admonishment that security matters require, but now it takes on new meaning in light of the discovery of the Top Secret USAFE cable. There was, indeed, Top Secret information concerning UFOs at Wright Field.[6]

In any case, despite the dogged efforts by Aldrich and others to access other Top Secret files once kept at Wright Field (later Wright-Patterson AFB), not one of them has been declassified—or even acknowledged to exist—by the Air Force. Here again we have an example whereby lower-classified documents on UFOs were made available, in this case to a journalist, but documents with a higher classification were withheld from him at the time—as well as from the rest of us, over 50 years later.

But the Air Force is not the only component of the U.S. government to collect UFO-related information and subsequently withhold it from public view. As I will discuss in a later chapter, when it comes to UFO documents, the Central Intelligence Agency has played the selective- disclosure game as well, and very skillfully indeed.

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17. Into the Seventies

Although the following incidents were not as dramatic as the two, full-flight missile shutdowns which occurred at Malmstrom AFB, in March 1967, they do indicate continuing UFO activity at ICBM bases as the 1970s unfolded—including reports of missile tampering—as well as at SAC nuclear bomber bases and even one U.S. Army tactical nuclear weapons storage depot.

Retired USAF Security Policeman ---- ------ told me, "I was assigned to Malmstrom from 1962 to 1964, and again from 1969 to 1972, and finally from 1975 to 1977. I was in the Security Police Group all three times. I worked several positions in missile security: Standboard section, Scheduling, and as flight security supervisor."

"I can't recall any occasion when I had a personal experience with UFO activity, but there was a location in the 490th Strategic Missile Squadron, generally referred to as the Kilo Triangle by security forces working in this area. This location was from the Kilo-1 [Launch Control Facility] to the Launch Facility at M-6 and another LF in the Mike Flight area—I can't recall [its designation]—that formed a triangle. I had heard several strange events had occurred in this area."

He continued, "One particular event I heard about happened to a Camper Alert Team (CAT) at the LF M-6. This LF is located south of Eddie's Corner near U.S. 87 and U.S. 191, along the boundary of the Lewis & Clark National Forest. Supposedly they had experienced an incident where a very bright light from the sky.—possibly coming from an object—had illuminated the site and scared the hell out of the team in the early morning hours of darkness. I also heard the site may have gone off alert about this same time."

"Allegedly one of the Camper Team guards had taken Polaroid photos of the light. I never heard what happened to the photos. The incident was reported to the command post, but I never heard anymore about it—it wasn't publicized. This was in the spring of 1972. I was not working in that area, but I was a Standboard evaluator and we made trips to the field to evaluate the security forces and [that's when] we heard these stories. I never paid much

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attention to them until years later when UFOs became an item of interest."

Finally, referring to the reported UFO sightings at missile facilities,—— said, "I have no doubt the security personnel [accurately] reported what they had seen, and I can understand why commanders would suppress the information, to keep the public from learning of a possible threat to military resources when there was virtually no way to defend against it."

In a later chapter, retired Minuteman missile Targeting Team member John W. Mills mentions other, similar reports by Air Force Security Police, regarding beams of light from the sky being directed onto launch facilities. Apparently, in those cases, no aerial object could be seen or heard.

Erased Targeting Tapes?

After the *Association of Air Force Missileers Newsletter* published an article of mine in September 2002, in which I asked former and retired USAF nuclear missile personnel to contact me regarding their UFO experiences, I received a letter from Walter F. Billings. In the early 1970s, 1st Lieutenant Billings was a deputy crew commander assigned to the 90th Strategic Missile Wing at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, near Cheyenne, Wyoming. At that time, the missile squadrons at the base were busy converting to Minuteman III missiles—each one armed with three nuclear warheads—hidden in underground silos sprinkled across the tri-state region where the borders of Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska converge. Each of Warren's 20 launch control capsules (LCCs) controlled ten missiles. In accordance with standard operating procedure, each LCC had its own Security Alert Team, or SAT team, which protected the capsule and its missiles.

Late one night in the fall of 1973, Billings was underground in the Golf LCC when he and his crew commander overheard an urgent message on the capsule's radio. "In those days," said Billings, "the UHF radio was turned on at all times. If one LCC spoke to their Security Alert Team, or other LCCs, all 20 LCCs heard the conversation." On this occasion, the launch crew at another LCC, designated "India", had just ordered their security guards to investigate an Outer Security Zone alarm triggered at one of India's ten missile launch facilities. This meant that someone or something had penetrated the security fence surrounding the site.

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As the Security Alert Team raced to the imperiled silo, Billings heard the India launch crew excitedly report that its Inner Security Zone alarm had also been triggered—indicating that the missile launcher itself had been penetrated in some manner. This was an extremely serious development.

Upon arriving at the site, the stunned security guards reported seeing a large, bright UFO hovering over it. “The LCC crew advised the SAT team to proceed no further and to observe only,” said Billings, “Approximately a minute later, the UFO moved off slowly for several thousand feet and then sped off at a high rate of speed.” The guards described the UFO as having “rotating colored lights surrounding a large glow of orange, which changed to bluish-white when it sped off.” Billings emphasized that, “The conversation between the India LCC crew and the SAT team was heard by 19 other LCC crews on duty that night.”

Back at the base, the missile squadrons commanders took immediate measures to suppress discussion of the incident. “Upon relief by the next crew and upon return to F.E. Warren AFB,” recalled Billings, “all crews on duty that night were informed that they would not speak to civilians or the news media about what they had heard on the UHF radio. Severe penalties were mentioned for those that did not heed this warning.”

In spite of these strict orders, rumors about the incident soon began circulating among the squadron's LCC crews. Certain officers in missile operations and maintenance apparently informed several launch crew members that a helicopter—dispatched by Strategic Air Command headquarters at Offut AFB, and carrying OSI agents—had flown to the compromised silo after the sighting there. (Over the years, OSI—the Air Force Office of Special Investigations—has reportedly dispatched agents to interview dozens of UFO eyewitnesses at missile sites near several different SAC bases.)

“The India crew of that night would not speak of the incident at all,” said Billings, “There were stories from maintenance that the missile in question had been carefully examined and they found that target tapes on the three warheads had been erased, supposedly by the UFO.” This finding, if true, would have been an extremely significant and troubling development: Without the tapes’ programmed global coordinates, the missile’s three

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warheads would have been unable to find their targets! (This rumor echoes an account of a UFO incident at a silo near Malmstrom AFB, Montana, in November 1975—some two years later—after which it was alleged that a maintenance crew had discovered that the missile's warhead targeting tapes had been, not erased, but altered.)

Billings said that while he could not personally vouch for the information he had heard about the warheads being compromised, he noted that the rumor had apparently come to the attention of his superiors. Shortly after stories about the tape erasures began to circulate among the missile crews, another stern order was issued. "The squadron commanders warned us again not to speak of incident," he recalled.

Some weeks after the incident involving the India LCC crew, another sighting occurred at one of the silos controlled by the Kilo LCC. "A Minuteman 111 was being worked on for some routine problem during one of those late fall nights," Billings said, "A UFO was observed by the entire missile maintenance crew. [It] appeared to be watching the work and was seen for a full five minutes as it maneuvered close to the missile silo." Billings said that he was informed of this incident by a 1st lieutenant in missile maintenance, approximately three days after it occurred.

Billings further reported having indirect knowledge of yet another UFO incident at F.E. Warren AFB, in the Spring of 1974. One morning, as he and his crew commander arrived at Charlie LCC for alert duty, they were approached by members of the site's SAT team and told that some hours earlier, under cover of darkness, a UFO was observed to land near the launch control facility. The staff sergeant in charge of the team informed Billings that they had provided a minute-by-minute report to the launch crew in the underground capsule. "When we asked [the crew] about this," Billings recalled, "they would not talk about it with us. I heard a few days later that the staff sergeant was in some sort of trouble for speaking to us about what he saw, and that the OSI was again involved."

Billings said that he has been unable to locate any declassified Air Force records relating to the three incidents at F.E. Warren, but insists that they did occur. In an effort to obtain an informed perspective on Billings' statements, I forwarded his letter to retired USAF Lt. Col. Philip Moore who, in 1978-79,

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had been the Commander of the 321st Strategic Missile Squadron at F.E. Warren AFB. Moore found the letter to be entirely credible. In an e-mail to me, he wrote, "Billings' statement is totally believable, and his supporting facts are correct in spite of his dates and terminology caveats."

However, I also sent the letter to another former Minuteman missile launch officer who skeptically questioned Billings' use of the term "target tapes", when describing the Minuteman Ill's guidance system. While tin Minuteman I missile utilized such tapes, the Minuteman III did not.

When I asked Moore to comment on this particular discrepancy, he replied, "[Regarding] Billings use of 'tapes' to refer to the maintenance part of the [guidance] system, the old tape system was replaced by a plug-in unit system. I think I remember that Billings was at F.E. Warren at the time MMI was deactivated and MM1I1 replaced it, having served in MMI and retrained in MMIII. Old terminology dies a slow death and the new system was often referred to as 'the tapes' for awhile after MMIII was in- place, until the old-timers got used to the new terminology."

Lt. Col. Moore's own ICBM-related UFO experience at Walker AFB, New Mexico, was discussed in an earlier chapter.

Rude Awakening at Fischbach

During the early 1970s, U.S. Army units based in Germany had hundreds of nuclear missiles at their disposal. Unlike the U.S. Air Force's high-yield strategic weapons, including the Minuteman ICBMs, most of the army's missiles were tactical nukes—intended for use against infantry and tanks on the battlefield—in the event the Soviet Union launched an invasion of Western Europe. However, one surface-to-surface missile, the Pershing la, carried a 400-kiloton warhead, making it as powerful as some strategic weapons deployed during that era. One location where these potent missiles were stored and maintained was the US Army Ordnance Depot at Fischbach. Germany. The facility was maintained by the 197th Ordnance Battalion.

In 1974, Private 1st Class R. Jack Phillips was assigned to the 193rd Military Police Battalion, stationed at Dahn, Germany. The unit's mission was to guard the nearby Fischbach Army Depot against unauthorized intruders and saboteurs. One night, possibly in May, Phillips was on guard

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when he observed a totally unexpected intruder—a domed-disc UFO—whose momentary but spectacular appearance made a lasting impression on him, even decades later.

In March 2007, Phillips posted a message on Frank Warren's UFO website, briefly summarizing that memorable experience. Hoping to learn more, I subsequently interviewed him by telephone. Phillips told me,

Fischbach was a 'special weapons' depot. My unit was stationed roughly 14-16 kilometers from Fischbach Depot at Dahn. We were support for the MP company actually stationed at the depot. We were never officially briefed about what missiles were assembled and stored there. All we saw were large green canisters. But the word was that Pershings were there. The depot was divided into three areas: Area I was where the weapons were assembled—payload to carriage. When I say 'carriage' I'm referring to the fuselage—the delivery system for each type of missile. Area 2 was where the delivery carriages were stored. Area 3 was where the payloads were stored and was highly- secured. There was a perimeter fence that encircled the whole depot complex, with the three secured areas placed within a double fence line.

I was guarding Area 3 when [the UFO sighting occurred]. Area 3 had several bunkers with squared-off corners and flat roofs covered by sod. The steel doors were embedded in exposed concrete and alarmed. The whole area surrounded by the double fence line and had seven watch towers. The night of the incident I was in Tower 4. Believe it or not, most of the guards slept on duty from time to time. When you pulled the [midnight to noon] shift, and you were all by yourself in the tower, it was almost impossible to stay awake all night. Anyway, the night of the incident, I had just awoken from "deep observation". It was about 3 or 3:30. I looked north and saw a really bright star. I'm from northwestern Michigan, where there is no light pollution, so the stars are really bright. But this was brighter than that. If it had been in the eastern sky, instead of the northern sky, I might have thought it was Venus.

I watched the 'star' for maybe fifteen seconds. It seemed to be stationary.

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Suddenly, it came toward meat unbelievable speed! You could see it coming, getting larger, but it was so fast! A moment or so later, it instantly stopped and hovered just beyond the fence line, over the clear area. In my posting [on Warren's website], I wrote that it was inside the Area 3 fence line when it hovered but, after thinking about it some more, it was probably just beyond the fence, over the clear area, about a hundred yards from my tower.

The craft was your classic UFO. It looked like two teacup saucers, one inverted on the other. From the side it looked like a cigar. It was maybe sixty feet in diameter but it had a dome, oh, maybe a third as wide as the entire length. Underneath, it was indented, like someone had pushed his finger up into it. It was a circular depression. You couldn't see anything that appeared metallic because the whole craft was covered by a greenish glow, like [phosphorescence]. There was no noise.

After maybe five seconds or so, the craft got much brighter—just for a second—then returned to its original intensity. As it brightened, the security lights in the complex went out. All power went out. I had just picked up the field phone—each tower has one connecting it to the guard shack—to report what I saw, but it was out. I was waiting for the two 12-cylinder generators that we had to kick-in, which should have happened 10 seconds after power was lost, but nothing happened.

Then, about 30-seconds later, the craft took off, so fast I couldn't tell which direction. I think it went west but I'm not really sure. As soon as it left, the lights came back on. Then all the bunker alarms started going off. All of them, the bells, the 'clackers'—that's what I called them because they made a clack-clack-clack sound—and the klaxons, which were mounted on poles, I think. Each guard shack had a master board where you could reset the alarms' electromagnetic switches. Every now and then, an electrical storm would set off a single alarm so it would have to be reset. After the craft left, the guards were frantically trying to reset all the alarms but nothing happened. The 'roving unit' had to go out and reset them by physically opening and closing each bunker's door. One NCO told me he had been

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there seven years and had never seen anything like it.

Before the incident, we would turn the power off and the generators would be tested from time to time, randomly. The alarms never went off during these tests. So I don't believe the power outage [that night] was the cause of the alarms. Maybe it was just an added bonus for effect.

I asked Phillips whether he had observed any unusual activity in Area 3 after the incident, such as Army personnel entering the bunkers to inspect the warheads, or the removal of warheads. He said he had not noticed anything out of the ordinary. I then asked Phillips if he had been debriefed about the UFO sighting. He responded, “Nope. No one even mentioned it. I didn’t talk to anyone and no one said anything to me. I was never asked to make a report. It was as if it never happened.”

I asked whether it was possible that no one else had actually seen the UFO, given the brief duration of the intrusion. Phillips replied, “I have always tried not to think about being the only one who saw it. Actually, considering that probably no one else was awake—unless it was his first night of duty—that’s the only thing I can come up with as to why no interest.”

I was incredulous about the possibility that all the guards at Area 3 had been sleeping during the UFO’s appearance, but Phillips seemed serious. He told me, “I know it’s a little unnerving to learn that highly-trained security personnel, with NAC SECRET ratings, were sleeping on the job. Especially guarding nukes. I guess Fischbach was a rarity, like the 4077th M.A.S.H. Unit.”

When I asked Phillips why he hadn’t reported his sighting, he said, “Well, there was the ’50-5 Program’ that I mentioned in my [online] posting. Every three months we were supposed to be given psychological evaluations. As I mentioned, it was a joke. There was a shortage of replacement personnel so the tests were usually skipped. If you were tested, you were always rated ‘Fit for Duty’. Even so, after the incident, I thought twice about reporting it. One of the main reasons I kept it to myself was there was nothing I knew of that could substantiate what I knew I saw. II anyone else saw it, they kept it from me. No one else said anything about it so I kept quiet. Later on, I did share it

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with one of the ‘old-timers' there. For the life of me I can’t remember his name except for 'Cleaver' and that was a nickname. Anyway, he claimed to have seen something bur wasn’t willing to share.”

I then asked Phillips why he had decided to post his account online. He replied, “Well, it was a long time ago. I’m 51 now so I figure there’s not much [the Army] can do to me. Besides, the incident never happened. As far as I know, officially, it never happened.”

Then Phillips added, “One time when I was a kid in Michigan, on i Boy Scout camp-out, I saw a triangular object in the sky with three lights It didn’t make any noise either. From that time on, I believed in UFOs The power outage at Fischbach, I think someone was showing us what they can do if they want to.”

“Dark Shapes” Near the Grand Forks Bomber Alert Area

Researcher Jim Klotz brought the following Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, sighting case to my attention. The written material relating to it —including contemporary correspondence between the source and Dr. J. Allen Hynek—was originally held by the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS). However, Klotz discovered copies of it, uh, elsewhere. Yes, I am being intentionally evasive.

The 1974 sighting was reported to Hynek by a then-active duty U.S. Air Force officer who requested anonymity', presumably due to his concern about potential repercussions resulting from his having filed a sensitive UFO report with a civilian research organization. In 2007, Klotz located the witness and I subsequently communicated with him. Unfortunately, he declined to be interviewed. Although the incident occurred over 30 years ago, I will honor his request for privacy.

The sighting may be summarized as follows: At 9:09 p.m. on the evening of October 14, 1974, air force security personnel assigned to the Bomber Alert Area at Grand Forks AFB were startled to see two large, dark oval shapes hovering at low altitude in the northwestern sky. A last-quarter moon had risen in the east, providing the only available light, other than the bright security lights arranged around the alert area. Although each of the unlit objects had five small lights arrayed across its surface, the craft approached

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to within a quarter-mile of the alert area before being noticed.

The Bomber Alert Area, also informally-known as “the Christmas Tree” for its configuration, was the staging area for several B-52s, all nuclear-armed and ready for rapid take-off in the event of a national emergency.

According to the report provided to Dr. Hynek, within a three- minute period, 14 Security Police sentries, two military pilots, and a B-52 maintenance supervisor independently reported the two looming objects to their respective control locations. After hovering for two minutes, the UFOs slowly moved in tandem in a southerly direction, making a faint humming sound as they faded from view.

The officer who reported the sighting described the craft as “saucer-like” and “solid black masses with no apparent glint or shine” on their non-reflective surfaces. The witnesses’ estimates of their diameters ranged between 50 and 75 feet, but there was a consensus that the objects were at 1500-feet in altitude.

The report noted that there had been moderate interference on the Security Police radio network while the objects were present, similar to the interference experienced during a thunderstorm. Other communication networks on the base had experienced “varying degrees of static.”

The officer contacted Grand Forks International Airport, but there were no inbound or outbound aircraft scheduled within 150 miles of the base during the period of the sighting. He also called the base air traffic control tower, to find out whether the UFOs had been tracked on radar, but found that the radar system had been off-line at the time. The officer also wrote that he had dispatched a Security Police patrol to search the area west of the Bomber Alert Area but it had found no ground disturbances suggestive of landing sites.

Finally, the officer wrote, “… three K-9 German Shepherd dogs [are used] within the Weapons Storage Area, located one-half mile east of the Alert Area. That night, their handlers reported the dogs were extremely nervous and fitful, which is highly irregular for these well-trained dogs.”

So far as is known, the UFOs had not maneuvered near or hovered over the Weapons Storage Area (WSA), which was one-half mile cast of the Bomber Alert Area. At the time, the WSA stored not only the nuclear bombs used

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aboard the B-52s assigned to the 319th Bombardment Wing, but also the nuclear warheads—the Re-entry Vehicles, or RVs—carried by the base's Minuteman II missiles, operated by the 321st Strategic Missile Wing. In 1994, the bomb wing was deactivated, as was the missile wing one year later, when its missile operations were transferred to Malmstrom AFB.

The Safeguard Complex

In 1967, the Department of Defense designated Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, as one of the first 10 locations to host an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) site to protect large metropolitan areas in the U.S. The idea was to use anti-missile missiles to destroy incoming Soviet nuclear warheads before they could hit their targets. Two years later. President Nixon decided that American ABM strategy would be redirected to protect ICBM sites instead.

The new program was called "Safeguard" and involved two types of nuclear-tipped missiles, the Sprint and the Spartan. According to globalsecurity.org, "Together these missiles provided a 'layered' defense. SPARTAN was designed to attack the incoming 'threat cloud of warheads, boosters and decoys while it was still above the atmosphere. SPRINT would then attack surviving warheads after they had penetrated the atmosphere where the resistance and friction of the air would separate the warheads from decoys and booster debris."[1] Two types of radar would detect the Soviet warheads—the Perimeter Acquisition Radar (PAR) and the Missile Site Radar (MSR). Four missile launch sites were positioned in a circular configuration around the MSR.

In January 1972, the U.S. and the Soviet Union signed the ABM Treat)', limiting each country to only one ABM site. Consequently, work on a second site near Malmstrom AFB, Montana, was discontinued. In September 1974, the newly-named 'Stanley R. Mickelson Complex', at Nekoma, North Dakota —was taken over by the U.S. Army Safeguard Command. The site was declared operational on October 1, 1975. One day later, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to inactivate the system. According to globalsecurity.org, "Department of Defense studies made available to the House Committee on Appropriations in September had shown that Soviet missiles with multiple warheads would be able to overwhelm the system."[2]

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I was curious as to whether there had been any UFO activity at the Safeguard site during its brief existence, so I used the bulletin board at a website devoted to the now-closed ABM complex, and contacted some of the former or retired U.S. Army personnel who had been stationed there in the early-to-mid 1970s.

One former sergeant responded, “It was reported that a few unusual sightings took place in the brief time the site was activated. I was present when Major Morales spoke with the colonel in charge of the base about spotting very fast moving objects over Canadian air space. They were discussing this as I was performing phone duty in the office next door. I could overhear them because they were standing in the doorway, just a few feet from me. The major was told not to discuss this with others. The colonel stated these objects did not behave like anything his computer and radar technicians were familiar with. From the tone and content of the conversation this was [possibly] the fourth or fifth time these sighting occurred and, by the time the Air Force fighters responded, the objects had disappeared. The two officers seemed very concerned.” Then he added, “Please keep my name confidential.”

Another former sergeant, Bill Carrothers, told me, “No, [I never heard of a UFO being sighted at the ABM complex,] but most of our time was spent inside monitoring alarms and the cameras which were pointed down at the missile fields. Can’t remember anyone else talking about it either, but we were a nuke site and talking about seeing UFOs would be one of the fastest ways in the world to lose your clearance.”

A former Army MP at the complex, Chris Steigerwald, told me, I Didn’t see anything myself, but I do recall one soldier seeing lights hovering over the missile field. He wasn’t taken seriously and his mental health started to decline. I think his name was S------- but I can’t say for sure. If I recall anything else, I’ll let yon know.”

Last but not least, another former MP who was stationed at the complex from 1974 to 1976, tersely responded, “I am sorry, I can neither confirm or deny such occurrences. Please remove me from your contact files.”

While all but one of these brief accounts are suggestive of some UFO activity having occurred at the ABM site during its brief lifetime, they

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obviously do not provide much detail at present. Perhaps some of my readers will be able to add something to the body of testimony by contacting me at one of the addresses provided in Appendix A.

Snooping on Our Airborne Missile Launch System?

Shortly after my first UFO-related article appeared in the September 2002 issue of the *Association of Air Force Missileers Newsletter*, I received the following email from Lt. Col. Frank Hale (USAF Ret.), in which he described his UFO sighting while serving with the 4th Airborne Command and Control Squadron, at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota. At the time of the incident, Hale was aboard an Airborne Launch Control System (ALCS) aircraft. ALCS was designed to provide back-up for land-based ICBM launch systems, in the event that those systems were incapacitated following a Soviet nuclear attack.

According to globalsecurity.org, "The 44th Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) played a key role in establishing the Airborne Launch Control System in the late 1960s. On I January 1970, the 44th SMW assumed airborne launch responsibility for Minot Air Force Base, ND, and Malmstrom AFB, MT. Four months later, the ALCS joined the Post Attack Command and Control System forming the 4th Airborne Command and Control Squadron, which was assigned to the 28th Bombardment Wing at Ellsworth AFB, SD."

Colonel Hale's email follows verbatim:

Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2002 7:52 AM Subject: Missileers and UFOs

Dear Mr. Hastings,

This correspondence is in response to your article in the AAFM Newsletter Volume 10, number 3.

My qualification as an ICBM launch officer began at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, in 1970. I was a crew commander there for a year and a half and then volunteered and was accepted for flying duty with the Airborne Launch Control System (ALCS) at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota in October

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of 1971. My organization at Ellsworth AFB was the 4th Airborne Command & Control Squadron (4th ACCS).

The purpose of the 4th ACCS was to provide a survivable platform in the event of an attack on the USA's land ICBMs and also to provide command and control for bombers and tankers if required.

The sighting I was involved in took place in 1975, I believe. My flight logs are in storage, if I can locate them I'll forward the exact date to you.

We had completed our training mission and were returning to Ellsworth AFB. My duties were completed and I went forward to the cockpit. I was sitting in the "jumpseat" behind and between the pilot and copilot for the final approach and landing. The aircraft was heading west toward Ellsworth following a path roughly above Interstate 90.

When we were approximately 50 miles from the base, I looked to my right and saw a silver-colored globe going approximately the same speed as the aircraft. As I watched, it stopped, went straight up, then forward, and did other incredible maneuvers at extremely high speeds. It came back down to our level and remained in my visual field for another minute or so. It then flew at an incredible speed in a westward direction, toward Wyoming.

When we landed I didn't mention the sighting to anyone except my wife. I was under the Human Reliability Program and I didn't want to become suspect for what I saw.

I continued to be on flight status for most of the remainder of my career, the only exception being in my final job as Base Commander at RAF Greenham Common, England. I never saw anything similar to the sighting which I described above.

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[Signed]
Frank Hale, Lt Col, USAF, Retired

I subsequently called Hale and asked a few basic questions regarding the UFO's approximate size and distance from the aircraft. He replied "The distance was probably a half-mile to a mile. I would say that it appeared slightly larger than a dime held at arm's length. The object was in view from two to three minutes."

I asked Hale to characterize what he saw. He replied emphatically, "It was a flying saucer!" I asked if the object was truly a sphere or, rather, had displayed a disc-shape at times, during its various maneuvers. He said, "It appeared as a silver globe. That's about as much as I can remember. I was thinking, 'What in the hell is that?!' It was the damnest thing I've ever seen!"

I asked Hale if he was certain that the UFO was a technological device of some kind, under intelligent control. He responded, "It had to have been. The pilot and the co-pilot apparently didn't see the object. They were flying the aircraft, concentrating on the final approach [to Ellsworth AFB], The navigator was positioned further back and didn't have a view out the cockpit windows. None of them commented on the object. I used to wear headphones on those missions and I couldn't hear anyone commenting about the object at all, so I assume no one else saw it, and it probably wasn't tracked on [the aircraft's] radar." Hale said he was certain that the UFO had been pacing and observing the airborne launch control aircraft. "Whoever was in it had to be looking us over. Otherwise it wouldn't have been so close."

I asked Hale if he had ever heard rumors from his squadron-mates, regarding similar incidents, but he responded that he hadn't. I then asked if he, while flying aboard any ALCS aircraft at any time, had ever experienced unexplained communications interference or unexplained equipment issues, which would have impacted the aircraft's ability to perform its mission. He replied, "No, I don't recall anything like that. The radio operators in the back of the aircraft had monitors that would have displayed any [electronic anomalies], and they would have told me."

I asked Hale if he had been aware of any UFO activity at RAF Greenham Common, while he was base commander there from mid-1987 to mid-1988,

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but he replied “No”. That joint Anglo/American installation deployed nuclear-capable USAF F-l11 fighter-bombers during those years. The nuclear cruise missiles that would have been carried by those aircraft in time of war were kept at the base’s Weapons Storage Area.

Sightings at Titan II ICBM Sites

It appears that another Titan ICBM base was the focus of UFO interest 0ver a decade later. In the mid-1970s. Air Force Staff Sergeant Thomas J. Manson was a Missile Facilities Technician assigned to the 381st Strategic Missile Wing at McConnell AFB, near Wichita, Kansas. In 2006, Manson told me,

Since I have no idea about your familiarity with the TII crew composition, there were four crew members on a crew: Missile Combat Crew Commander (MCCC), Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC), Ballistic Missile Analyst Technician (BMAT) and Missile Facilities Technician (MFT). I was the last one. The first two were officers and latter two enlisted. I know that a number of Security Police teams assigned to Titan II sites in the ‘70s reported [UFO-sightings]—how many I can’t remember, but fewer than I can count on one hand. The SPs would come on-site and report it to us, the operations crew on duty. But I don’t think it went any further than that, and I wasn’t going to relay the story to the command post or anywhere [else] because I wasn’t sure they weren’t pulling our legs. In any case, I did hear about some small number of incidents where some lights in the sky—always at night—were seen around the Titan II missile complexes by the security teams that were arriving there at the end of their rounds in their sector.

What I recall is hearing reports from friends of mine, or other SPs who were assigned to our complex, where they would be available [to guard] the other complexes in the sector. Only once did I get a detailed explanation of what one team saw, and it has been so long ago, I don t think I can reassemble what they told me into intelligible information. What I think I remember is that the SP team was returning to our site and saw some form of airborne vehicle relatively stationary over the complex. I don’t remember how they

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described it at all, but [they said] that it left very quickly as they pulled up to the gate. They may have described its departure path and rate [of speed] as non-linear too, but I'm not sure about that. I seem to think I remember them saying that they were initially afraid to get too close to the complex, but I could be wrong about that too. [I think it must] have been sometime between 1976 and '79 inclusive, and I seem to think it happened at complex 533-5. of course, the folks with the most info would be those two SPs. This was 30 years ago and I don't trust my memory all that well for that period.

After [hearing that particular account], I mentioned it to other crew members, and a few responded, 'Yeah, that happened at [Titan site] 3-X too' or, 'Yeah, I heard a similar story from the guys at XYZ,' but I never got any details.

From the control center in the Til complex we could see nothing, although we would venture topside occasionally on warm summer evenings just to get out of the ground. [Regarding UFOs,] personally, I never saw a blessed thing! I always wanted to, but never did.

Another former Titan II missileer, Kenneth Dziewulski, has also acknowledged having heard about UFO-related incidents at ICBM sites in Kansas during the 1970s. As was the case with Tom Manson, I emailed Dziewulski after he posted a message on a Titan ICBM website. In response to my query about UFO sightings at McConnell, he replied,

"I am a retired Air Force Captain and former Crew Commander [assigned to] the 381 st SMW, McConnell AFB, KS from 1975-1979. While there, we would periodically hear stories about incidents similar to those you outlined in your article. When I was a Deputy Crew Commander, my Commander,--- ----, supposedly had been on alert [years earlier] when a 'UFO' incident occurred at McConnell, but he was not allowed to discuss it. I really don't have much more than that. We were on crew with Captain ----- around 1977-78, so [the incident] probably occurred in the 1973- 1975 time-frame, about the time he would have been a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander, and before I got there."

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The article Dziewulski alluded to is titled, “UFO Sightings at ICBM Sites and Weapons Storage Areas”, which I had posted online at www.nicap.org a few days prior to emailing him and Manson. The article summarizes my interviews with 20 or so former or retired Air Force nuclear missile personnel who had been assigned to Minuteman and Atlas ICBM squadrons during the Cold War era. (All of those interviews also appear in this book.)

Tom Manson, upon reading the article, chided me,

Robert,

I just looked at your article. You have a lot of work left to do! I don’t know how you will get it done, but when I searched for Kansas, Arkansas, and Arizona, there were no hits! That appears to mean that you didn’t talk to anyone from McConnell, Davis-Monthan or Little Rock [AFBs]… Unfortunately it has been so long now that it will be very hard to find or identify the personnel who could tell you about these events.”

Manson is absolutely correct about one thing. After 35 years of researching nuclear weapons-related UFO sightings, I feel that I have just scratched the surface. My work has always been a catch-as-catch-can proposition—identifying, locating and interviewing former or retired Air Force personnel who might provide a few answers about such incidents, usually years or decades after-the-fact.

However. Manson was wrong when he said I hadn’t approached former Titan missileers. Actually, I written to a great many veterans who had been stationed at the three Titan bases Manson mentioned, but I had never been able to find anyone assigned to a Titan II squadron who was willing to acknowledge a familiarity with UFO sightings at their ICBM sites—that is, until I interviewed Tom Manson and Ken Dziewulski.

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18. The Northern Tier Incursions

In 1975, UFO sightings at Malmstrom AFB were as numerous as they were ominous. On February 20, 1975, the *Harlowton* [Montana] *Times* newspaper reported the following:

"The Wheatland County Sheriff's office was contacted by radio about 9:00 p.m. Sunday, February 17th by a Highway Patrol radio station who reported that three deputies in Roundup had spotted three UFOs on the horizon heading towards Harlowton...At 2:00 a.m. [on the 18th] several Air Policemen from the K-l [Launch Control Facility] north of Harlowton reported they had spotted an object hovering over K-10 which is located 7 miles north of the Harlowton airport..."[1]

This incident heralded the start of the most intensive period of UFO activity at Malmstrom AFB's ICBM sites since the March 1967 missile shutdown events. In November 1975, UFOs would hover over several LFs and LCFs, be tracked on radar on numerous occasions, and consistently elude the jet interceptors launched to chase them.

However, Malmstrom was not the only Strategic Air Command (SAC) base responding to UFO incursions that year. In the fall, Minot AFB, North Dakota—another Minuteman missile base—reported that a silent UFO had flown over the base's principle radar installation at very low altitude. Meanwhile, two other "Northern Tier" bases, Wurtsmith and Loring—where B-52 bombers were based—experienced a sudden increase in sighting reports, primarily from security police guarding the nuclear Weapons Storage Areas (WSAs).

The ominous intrusions prompted SAC to implement Security Option 3, thereby placing these missile and bomber bases on high-alert. Declassified Air Force documents, as well as those originating at the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) and the National Military Command Center (NMCC) at the Pentagon, starkly portray the defense establishment's deepening concern regarding UFO activity at its nuclear weapons bases.

The following NORAD log entries, relating to the sightings at Malmstrom's Launch Control Facilities and Launch Facilities, were listed in an official

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U.S. Air Force letter released to researchers in 1977, via the Freedom of Information Act.[2] The time of each report is expressed in 2 or Zulu Time, the military's version of Greenwich Mean Time. My own comments, in brackets, follow a few of the log entries:

24th NORAD Region Senior Director's Log (Malmstrom AFB, MT):

7 Nov 75 (1035Z) Received a call from the 341st Strategic Air Command Post (SAC CP), saying that the following missile locations reported seeing a large red to orange to yellow object: M -l, L-3, LIMA, and L-6... Commander and Deputy for Operations (DO) informed.

7 Nov 75 (1203Z) SAC advised that the LCF at Harlowton, Montana, observed an object which emitted a light which illuminated the site driveway.

7 Nov 75 (1319Z) SAC advised K-l says very bright object to their east is now southeast of them and they are looking at it with 10x50 binoculars. Object seems to have lights (several) on it, but no distinct pattern. The orange/gold object overhead also seems to have lights on it. SAC also advised female civilian reports having seen an object bearing south of her position six miles west of Lewistown. [Note that all of these reports refer to the observation of aerial "objects". Apparently, the Security Alert Teams could not identify them as either military or civilian aircraft.]

7 Nov 75 (1327Z) L-l reports that the object to their northeast seems to be issuing a black object from it, tubular in shape. In all this time, surveillance has not been able to detect any sort of track except for known traffic.

[In other words, when these sightings were first reported by SATs, radar personnel at Malmstrom AFB and Great Falls International Airport could not detect any unknown aerial objects near the missile sites. As we shall see, radar contact with the UFOs was finally established as the sightings

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continued to unfold.]

7 Nov 75 (1355Z) K-l and L-l report that as the sun rises, so do the objects they have visual. 7 Nov 75 (1429) From SAC CP: As the sun rose, the UFOs disappeared. Commander and [Director of Operations] notified.

8 Nov 75 (0635Z) A security camper team at K-4 reported UFO with white lights, one red light 50 yards behind white light. Personnel at K-l seeing same object.

8 Nov 75 (0645Z) Height personnel picked up objects 10-13,000 feet. Track J330, EKLB 0649, 18 knots, 9,500 feet. Objects as many as seven, as few as two A/C.

[Height-finding radar finally confirmed that UFOs were present, varying over time between two and seven in number.]

8 Nov 75 (0753Z) J330 unknown 0753. Stationary/seven knots/12,000... two F-106… NCOC notified. [Radar confirmed that one UFO, at an altitude of 12,000 feet, had hovered—that is, was “stationary”—before resuming flight at a leisurely 7 knots, or 9 mph. Shortly thereafter, two F-106s were scrambled to intercept it.]

8 Nov 75 (0905Z) From SAC CP: L-sites had fighters and objects; fighters did not get down to objects.

8 Nov 75 (0915Z) From SAC CP: From four different points: Observed objects and fighters; when fighters arrived in the area, the lights went out; when fighters departed, the lights came back on; To NCOC. [As SAT personnel at four different locations watched, the UFOs played cat-and-mouse with the F-106s, extinguishing their illumination as the jets approached their position and re-illuminating themselves after the fighters

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returned to base. The NORAD Combat Operations Center (NCOC) in Colorado Springs, Colorado was immediately informed of this incident.]

8 Nov 75 (1105Z) From SAC CP: L-5 reported object increased in speed—high velocity, raised in altitude and now cannot tell the object from stars. To NCOC. 9 Nov 75 (0305Z) SAC CP called and advised SAC crews at Sites L-l, L-6, and M-l observing UFO. Object yellowish bright round light 20 miles north of Harlowton, 2 to 4,000 feet. 9 Nov 75 (0320Z) SAC CP reports UFO southeast of Lewistown, orange white disc object. 24th NORAD Region surveillance checking area. Surveillance unable to get height check. [Note the reference to the UFO having a "disc" or saucer shape. Two more log entries from November 9th confirm that UFOs continued to be reported by SAT teams positioned near various missile launch facilities. Then the action moved from Malmstrom to Minot AFB, in North Dakota.] 10 Nov 75 (1125Z) UFO sighting reported by Minot Air Force Station, a bright star-like object in the west, moving east, about the size of a car... the object passed over the radar station, 1,000 to 2,000 feet high, no noise heard… NCOC notified.

END OF NORAD LOG ENTRIES

Actually, before being officially declassified, these dramatic disclosures had been leaked to a UFO research organization—the National Investigations Committee of Aerial Phenomena (NICAP)—in 1976. NICAP's president, Jack Acuff, had developed a secret "Deep Throat" source—an air force analyst working for the Defense Intelligence Agency—who, on at least one occasion, surreptitiously passed along classified documents relating to UFOs, including a four-part message sent by NORAD's Commander in Chief to all NORAD units on November 11, 1975. The message contained the log excerpts listed above. While we can argue about the ethical questions surrounding these unauthorized releases—in the context of military secrecy vs. the public's right-to- know—the leaked documents nevertheless provided a rare inside look at the U.S. military's covert response to UFO activity at its nuclear weapons sites.

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Eventually, the leaked NORAD and National Military Command Center messages were circulated within the UFO research community, prompting various individuals to file FOIA requests, in an effort to force their formal declassification. Initially, the NMCC message was held back, while the NORAD log entries were reluctantly released by the Air Force, chopped into the curt passages I inserted above. Much later, the original NORAD message was also declassified.

The NORAD and NMCC messages were not the only documents circulated in response to the Northern Tier Base UFO sightings. In 2002, I interviewed retired USAF Colonel John W. Haley III, who had been assigned to Strategic Air Command Headquarters in the mid-1970s. Before discussing the Northern Tier cases, Haley described an earlier assignment:

I was the 5th MMS (Munitions Maintenance Squadron) Commander 5th Bomb Wing from June 1973 to August 1975, at Minot AFB, North Dakota. My Squadron loaded [nuclear] weapons on the B52H [bombers] and serviced, stored and provided Reentry Vehicles/Reentry systems to the 91 st Strategic Missile Wing. We had no anomalous UFO sightings during this period. However, the incident I am going to relay to you occurred shortly after I returned to SAC Headquarters in 1975.

From June 1975 to December 1977, I was again stationed—it was my second tour—at Headquarters, SAC, at Bellevue, Nebraska, as a Munitions Staff Officer. A daily report, assembled by the Office of Information—of any information that might be of interest to the General Officers—was circulated first to the generals and then to the total staff.

In the fall of 1975—September, I believe—a series of UFO sighting reports, at the Loring AFB Weapons Storage Area and the Malmstrom AFB ICBM field, were detailed in the daily report for at least a week. The Loring incident [involved] a UFO that periodically hovered over the WSA and was reported to be taking radiation readings. I do not know how this was determined.

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At Malmstrom, a UFO followed, at low altitude, a missile crew on its way to a site. They were told by radio not to proceed with the changeover [of the personnel on duty], but to drive around. Meanwhile, an F-106 from the 5th [Fighter Interceptor Squadron] at Minot AFB was scrambled for an intercept. The pilot did get the UFO on radar and [had a] visual but was outdistanced and could not achieve a lock for firing. The intercept was broken off due to low fuel. The UFO returned. Another F-106 was scrambled with the same results. This took several hours. Years later, I asked the Malmstrom area Air Division Commander what he knew of this incident. He would not discuss it and neither would any of the HQ SAC generals at the time.

I asked Haley if he could recall the exact title of the daily report he had mentioned. Researcher Jim Klotz had volunteered to file an FOIA request for it, but needed that information to do so. Haley replied, "The report was known as the daily recap but did not have a formal name and, surprisingly, did not have an official cover letter. It did have a SAC staff routing page for the applicable deputy—Deputy Chief of Staff/Logistics, for instance. Each directorate received their [own] copy to route to the branches and their individual staffers. The report was quite crude, with different sizes of paper, copies of cut-out newspaper articles, logs, and command and control reports—anything the Office of Information thought the staff might be interested in."

I then asked Haley if he recalled any details regarding the reported UFOs. He replied, "I do not recall any description being given other than metallic objects that hovered or zoomed away."

Finally, I asked Haley about the UFO hovering over the Loring AFB Weapons Storage Area, where nuclear bombs were stockpiled. | wondered whether the written reference to the radiation-monitoring had been speculative, or expressed as a certainty. He replied, "I think it was conjecture, based on the assumption that radiation was the only signature of the nuclear weapons that could have been monitored. This presumes that looking into buildings and bunkers was not possible—which was probably a naive

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assumption."

Haley's perspective as an insider is invaluable. His recollection of the incidents having occurred in "September" 1975 is in error, but understandable given the passage of decades. The documented incident at the Loring AFB Weapons Storage Area occurred on October 27th. On the other hand, his description of the two attempted fighter intercepts may be a previously unknown case. I am unaware of any declassified reference to fighters being launched from Minot AFB, North Dakota, in the fall of 1975, to intercept any of the UFOs reportedly maneuvering over the missile field in Montana. All of the fighters had been scrambled from Great Falls International Airport, because Malmstrom AFB's lone runway was under repairs during that period. If the intercept incident did indeed occur as Haley remembers, the reason for the launches from Minot, rather than Malmstrom or Great Falls, remains unclear.

One significant UFO sighting not mentioned in the NORAD document occurred some 40 miles WNW of Malmstrom AFB, on November 11, 1975, and involved a B-52 bomber performing practice bomb runs over Freezeout Lake. According to Cascade County Sheriff Captain Keith Wolverton, an employee of the Montana Fish and Game Department had been near the lake when he observed a small round white light flying directly behind the bomber. Using a rifle-mounted telescope to get a better look at the object, he saw the small UFO seemingly attach itself to the bomber for a few seconds before climbing out of sight at high speed. Wolverton reports that Choteau County Sheriff Pete Howard was later informed of the sighting, whereupon he made inquiries with unnamed military personnel who told him that shortly after the UFO attached itself to the bomber, the aircraft's radar malfunctioned. According to Wolverton, the Air Force denied any knowledge of the incident.[3]

Another significant nukes-related UFO sighting apparently took place at Malmstrom AFB in the fall of 1975, but also somehow escaped mention in the previously-noted NORAD message of November 11th. The incident occurred at the base's Weapons Storage Area and has now been confirmed by both a former missile maintenance technician and the former commander of Malmstrom's helicopter unit.

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At that time, Staff Sergeant Joseph M. Chassey was assigned to the 341st Missile Maintenance Squadron at Malmstrom, and worked in the Mechanical Shop. “I was a missile mechanic,” Chassey told me, “I repaired and tested all of the equipment used in the field.”

While on duty one evening, Chassey overheard an unusual radio transmission. “I was pulling a detail called ‘parts-runner’ on that particular night,” he recalled, “Basically, you worked from seven in the evening until seven in the morning. If a field maintenance team came-up short on a part, or needed anything, the parts-runner loaded up a Crew Cab and drove out to the silo where they were working.”

Chassey continued, “I had already made one run [out to a missile field] and had come back to base hungry. Midnight Chow, as it was called, was the best cooking of the day, and I would normally eat my dinner between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. I had settled-in and was eating by myself. At the table next to me, a squad of “sky cops” [Security Police] had just sat down when an urgent radio call came in for them. That’s when I heard the report of an unknown intruder over the Weapons Storage Area on the east side of the air base. Needless to say, the forks and spoons hit the table and the SPs took off. At the time, it really didn’t occur to me what was going on.”

The Weapons Storage Area (WSA) consists of several hardened bunkers in which the Minuteman missiles’ nuclear warheads—known as Re-entry Vehicles, or RVs—are stored.

The next day, while working at the Mechanical Shop, Chassey began to hear rumors about the events of the previous evening. “Everyone was passing on what they had heard, including my bosses,” he said, “The rumor was that helicopters [from Malmstrom] had chased the object, which withdrew to the east, traveling toward a small town called Belt. After almost getting to Belt, the object traveled back to the base, leaving the helicopters far behind.” Chassey said that the object had been described as an extremely bright light and was assumed to have been a bona fide UFO because of its superior capabilities. He emphasized, “I mean it flat outran the helicopters. We heard that it zipped out to Belt and back to the base in no time.” Chassey added, “I wish I had gotten a first-hand look [at the object] so I could give you better detail.”

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When I asked Chassey if he could remember the approximate date of the incident, he replied, “I was in the Air Force from October 1971 to October 1975. I’m pretty sure it was in the fall [of 1975], as I was getting to be a short-timer.”

Chassey’s account of a UFO hovering over Malmstrom AFB’s WSA has been corroborated—although very sparingly—by retired USAF Lt. Col. Robert Peisher. During most of 1975, Peisher had been the Commanding Officer of the base’s only helicopter unit, Detachment #5 of the 37th Air Rescue Squadron. Despite its official name, the unit’s chief mission was not air rescue, but air support for the 341st Strategic Missile Wing. When I interviewed Peisher in July 2004, he made some rather remarkable statements regarding the mysterious events at Malmstrom in late 1975.

As was the case in 1967, many of the UFOs were reported by Air Forces Security Police guarding the Minuteman missile sites scattered across the Montana plains. Other reports came from the Cascade County Sheriff’s Department, which repeatedly notified the base about the presence of strange aerial craft—variously described as UFOs or silent helicopters—which law enforcement officers and civilians had observed hovering or flying erratically at low altitude. In other cases, the helicopters were described as audible, but were painted black and lacked standard identification markings.

If this were not enough, immediately after some of the sightings, ranchers began finding strangely mutilated cattle in their fields, surgically- sliced apart and sometimes devoid of blood. In short, for much of 1975. Malmstrom AFB seemed to be the focal point for some kind of high weirdness.

In mid-October, well into the sighting and mutilation wave. Captain Keith Wolverton, a deputy sheriff with the Cascade County Sheriff’s Department, requested a meeting with Peisher to discuss the worrisome reports of helicopters being sighted in the vicinity of some of the strangely slaughtered cattle. Wolverton told Peisher and other commanders at Malmstrom that there was an urgent need for such a meeting because several irate ranchers had publicly vowed to shoot at any helicopter seen flying low over their livestock. Some of them apparently suspected, without any proof, that the helicopter unit at Malmstrom was somehow involved in the bizarre animal deaths.

Peisher told me that he and Wolverton met at his office on base, where they

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first compared notes. “I had a map with all the missile launch facilities,” said Peisher, “and he had a map of the unknown sightings and cattle mutilations. Most of the mutilation sites marked on his map were located within the missile [field] complex.” According to Peisher, over 80 UFO sightings and mutilation sites fell within those boundaries, many of them quite near the missile sites themselves. Despite this striking pattern, Peisher remained composed. “Even though we were alert that something unexplainable was happening, it was hard to get excited about it, especially since there was no apparent threat to the missiles. It might be a big hoax.”

(Decades later, a report compiled by the National Institute of Discovery Science—NIDS—found a statistically-significant correlation between the mutilations and sightings of UFOs or unidentified helicopters.[4])

Wolverton asked Peisher if he would be willing to appear on local TV in Great Falls, in an effort to reassure the local ranchers that the Air Force was not involved in the mutilations. Peisher quickly agreed, and on October 15th, without prior authorization from his superiors, he pleaded his case in a recorded statement, which appeared on the news that evening. During the televised interview, the helicopter commander pointedly noted that his unit’s choppers—six Huey UH-1Fs—were painted gray, blue and yellow, exhibited the standard Air Force logo and identification numbers, and were quite noisy while in flight. In other words, they did not even remotely resemble the mysterious helicopters reported at various mutilation sites. As previously mentioned, those choppers, when seen in daylight, were often described as black and unmarked.

Furthermore, Peisher noted that his helicopters almost always Hew in daylight—ferrying personnel and materiel between Malmstrom and the remotely-located missile sites. If one of his Hueys was sighted flying near the ground, he said, it was merely inspecting the underground electrical cables between the various launch control facilities and their missile sites, to determine whether they had become exposed by erosion, or were otherwise compromised.

Finally, Peisher insisted that the Air Force was greatly concerned about the cattle mutilations too, because many of them had occurred within Malmstrom’s Minuteman missile field. Therefore, he said, officials at the

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base would continue to cooperate with the investigations being conducted by the local sheriff's office.

When I told Peisher that I was surprised that he had not sought prior approval from higher-ups before deciding to go on television, he responded, "I think it was a matter of timing. It was something that I felt I had to do. My actions were for the safety of my chopper pilots I didn't think that I needed to contact my squadron commander, since he was located at [F.E.] Warren AFB, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. I was the commander of the helicopter detachment at Malmstrom. The way | figured it, I would have been in a lot more trouble if I hadn't spoken out and, later on, someone ended up taking a shot at one of my helicopters.'' Apparently, his independent initiative met with approval. Peisher said that after his televised appeal for calm, no one had ever openly expressed displeasure over his decision to speak on behalf of his squadron.

After discussing his appearance on television, I asked Peisher whether he had personally been informed about the numerous UFO sightings at Minuteman missile facilities, which had occurred during the same period of time when the mutilated cattle had been found. "The reports that I got were at least third-hand," he said. Nevertheless, Peisher admitted that several Air Force personnel had once informed him that a UFO "the size of a football field" had silently flown at low altitude over the Echo Launch Control Facility, one night during the fall of 1975.

Peisher was told that a Non-Commissioned Officer present during the incident had been standing outside one of the buildings at the launch control site. When he saw the object, he instantly become nauseous, Peisher was told this sudden distress had been due to some unknown effect produced by the UFO, but he was dubious. He wondered whether the nausea was simply a natural response related to the NCO's fear at seeing such a large, unknown aerial object so close-up.

I then asked Peisher if he recalled hearing any rumors about Echo Flight's nuclear missiles going-off alert status—malfunctioning—just after the UFO was sighted. He said that he didn't, but admitted that he had later read an article about such things occurring at Malmstrom, during 1967.

In addition to the incident at Echo Flight, Peisher said that he had also been

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verbally informed about UFOs being sighted near several other missile sites during that period, but he could not remember any details. However. Peisher did say that his helicopters had repeatedly ferried unnamed 341st Strategic Missile Wing command personnel and investigators to and from various missile launch control facilities following some of the UFO-related incidents in 1975.

Toward the end of the interview, I asked Peisher about the incident during which a UFO had allegedly hovered directly over Malmstrom's Weapons Storage Area—where Minuteman missile Re-entry Vehicles (nuclear warheads) were stored. After all, former missile maintenance technician Joe Chassey had told me that the rumor was Peisher's helicopters had temporarily chased the UFO away. It was this allegation which prompted me to contact Peisher in the first place.

After I briefly summarized Chassey's indirect knowledge of the incident, Peisher responded, "Yeah, that sounds right." I quickly blurted out, "So you did know about that!" Too late. Immediately after my outburst, I could sense Peisher drawing back, carefully choosing his words. After a few long seconds, he cautiously confirmed that he had indeed heard about the helicopter pursuit, but only "much later."

Puzzled, I asked Peisher how that would have been possible. Given that he was the commanding officer of Malmstrom's helicopter unit in 1975, he would have personally ordered the pursuit of the UFO, or he would have at least been informed about it by the deputy commander or some other subordinate, shortly afterward, if he had been off-duty at the time the incident occurred.

Peisher explained that he had ceased to be the CO of the helicopter unit sometime toward the end of November. He said that although he was still at Malmstrom until late December, he had been preparing for his next assignment. "I worked mostly for the Base Commander," he said, "while trying to get my stuff in order to leave." Peisher said that it was proper protocol "not to drop in" on one's successor, so as to give that person free-reign. Therefore, Peisher said, after his assignment ended he had virtually no contact with the helicopter unit that he had once commanded. Consequently, he had only heard about the UFO hovering over the Weapons Storage Area

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sometime after he arrived at his next assignment, with the 4lst Weather and Rescue Wing, located at McClellan AFB, in Sacramento, California.

While I respect Mr. Peisher, and sincerely appreciate his candor regarding UFO activity at Malmstrom during that period, it seems as if there is something amiss with this scenario. Staff Sergeant Joe Chassey, who first told me of the incident at the WSA, had said that lie separated from the Air Force in October 1975, which his service records confirm. Obviously, the UFO incident he describes had to have occurred sometime before October 31st. On the other hand, Bob Peisher told me that he was the commander of Detachment #5 of the 37th Air Rescue Squadron until some unspecified date in late November. If that were the case, he still would have been commanding the helicopter unit on the night the UFO hovered over the base's Weapons Storage Area.

While I do not know the reason for this discrepancy, after some deliberation, I decided not to press Peisher further on the matter. Either his memory regarding his first hearing about the UFO incident is in error, or he has reasons, not expressed, for claiming that he had only learned of it much later. Although I would like to solve this little mystery, the important point is that Peisher has confirmed that a UFO had in fact hovered over Malmstrom AFB's WSA, one night in the fall of 1975, and had been chased away, at least temporarily, by his unit's helicopters.

At the conclusion of our conversation, Peisher offered to loan me his copy of the book, *Mystery Stalks the Prairie*, which summarizes in great detail the strange events that occurred around Malmstrom AFB in 1975. One of the authors, then-Cascade County Deputy Sheriff Captain Keith Wolverton, had visited Peisher at Malmstrom, to urge him to appear on TV. Wolverton had also personally investigated many of the cattle mutilations around the area and, on one occasion, sighted a UFO while out on patrol.

When the book arrived, I discovered Peisher had inserted into it a two-page letter summarizing the UFO activity and cattle mutilations that had occurred while he was at Malmstrom. The letter also included several re-written comments by his wife Ann, which she had initially recorded shortly after leaving Malmstrom, while her memories were still fairly fresh.

At the end of the letter, Peisher wrote, "I believe that the cattle slayings, the

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UFO sightings, and the missile [field] complex were connected. I think it was a UFO observation and data-gathering mission. There could have been government involvement [with the cattle mutilations] at some level...” Then, in apparent frustration, he added, “Most people just want to keep everything on an even keel and live happily ever after by not investigating the unusual.”

The Incidents at the Loring AFB Weapons Storage Area

Another Northern Tier SAC base reporting UFO activity in the fall of 1975 was Loring AFB, near Limestone, Maine. At that time, Loring was home of the 42nd Strategic Bomb Wing. In the event of war, the wing's bombers—each one laden with two hydrogen bombs, or a compliment of nuclear-tipped cruise missiles—would fly north over the polar regions to targets in the Soviet Union. Although that trip would take many hours—far longer than the 30-minutes required for a flight of ICBMs to reach comparable targets—strategic bombers were nevertheless an integral part of the United States’ Strategic Triad of nuclear forces, composed of bombers and both land-based and submarine-launched missiles.

In their seminal book on the UFO-Nukes Connection—titled, *Clear Intent*, but later republished as *The UFO Cover-Up*—researchers Barry Greenwood and Larry Fawcett vividly describe the intriguing events that occurred at Loring’s Weapons Storage Area in late October.

On the 27th, at 7:45 p.m., personnel assigned to the 42nd Security Police Squadron at Loring were startled to see an unknown craft enter the base's restricted airspace, at an estimated altitude of 300 feet. The craft began a circling pattern and eventually flew within 300 yards of the Weapons Storage Area, at an estimated altitude of 150 feet. Then the unidentified craft moved off to the north, tracked by the base’s radar operators.

Security Policeman Danny K. Lewis, who observed the craft, quickly notified the 42nd Bomb Wing Command Post and the base was put on alert. Wing command personnel and security police converged on the WSA and inspected the area but no indication of intrusion or damage could be found. Priority messages were sent from Loring to the National Military Command Center at the Pentagon, the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, SAC Headquarters, and other commands, informing them of the incident. Because the craft was

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reported to have occasionally hovered, it was described as an unidentified helicopter in the military message traffic.

The next night, October 28th, at almost exactly the same time, another unidentified craft entered Loring's airspace and again moved toward the Weapons Storage Area. This time, there was no question about the nature of the intruder. It was most definitely not a helicopter.

Sgt. Steven Eichner, a B-52 ground crew chief, was standing on the flight line, working with members of his team. He later said that the UFO appeared to be hovering over the flight line, several hundred yards from the WSA. Eichner described the object as an elongated football, as long as four cars, and reddish-orange in color.

As the ground crew stared in disbelief, the object suddenly seemed to disappear and then quickly reappeared at the north end of the runway, near the Weapons Storage Area, moving in an erratic, stop-and-start movement.

Eichner's crew jumped in a launch truck and raced toward the UFO. Turning onto the road to the WSA, the team saw the UFO hovering some 300 feet in front of them, five feet above the ground. In a sworn affidavit, Eichner stated, "the object looked like all the colors were blending together, as you were looking at a desert scene. You see waves of heat rising off the desert floor. This is what I saw. There were these waves in front of the object and all the colors were blending together. The object was solid and we could not hear any noise coming from it."

A few seconds later, the ground crew heard security police sirens coming toward them and quickly left the area. They returned to their original position and watched the activity at the WSA from a distance. After a few seconds, the UFO extinguished its illumination and left the area, again being tracked on the bases radar. Several Security Police vehicles had parked near the WSA, their searchlights furtively searching for the intruder. Eichner's team did not report the incident because, at their closest approach to the UFO, they had been in a restricted area and were anxious about an official reprimand. Only later, after things had settled down, did Eichner swear out his affidavit.

Once again, the security police searched the Weapons Storage Area, both inside and outside the security perimeter, but found nothing amiss. And, once again, priority messages about the incident were sent from Loring to all of the

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military commands and individuals previously mentioned.

I have learned that following the second intrusion at the WSA, a command decision was made to defend the area with heavy machine guns, in the event that the UFO returned. However, for unknown reasons, the plan was quickly cancelled. In 2003, Dean M. Sams told me, "At the time of the UFO incidents I was a Staff Sergeant, a Boom Operator assigned to the 407th Air Refueling Squadron at Loring. The object flying around the WSA on the east side of the base was extensively discussed by Col. Robert Chapman at Commanders Call. On the second night, I was assigned with a crew to go to Pease AFB to pick up one or two jeeps with .50 caliber machine guns to bring back to Loring. We were going to get the jeeps for the defense of the base. But I didn't go get them and neither did anyone else. We got as far as pre-flight when we were cancelled. All I remember about the UFO is that it was an extremely bright light and it moved verrrrry fast. I have no idea what it was but I have no doubt something was there!"

Ditto, Wurtsmith

On October 30, 1975, two days after the UFO incident at Loring AFB's Weapons Storage Area, another Northern Tier Strategic Air Command base experienced a nearly identical visitation by an unknown aerial intruder. Wurtsmith AFB, just west of Oscoda, Michigan, was at that time home to the 379th Bomb Wing—another B-52 nuclear bomber unit.

According to declassified Air Force documents[5], just after 10 p.m., various members of the 379th Security Police Squadron (SPS) made several urgent radio calls, one after the other, reporting an unidentified "helicopter", with what appeared to be running lights, flying erratically at low altitude near the base's western perimeter.

Minutes later, the same, or perhaps a different craft was excitedly reported by at least three security guards to be hovering directly over the Weapons Storage Area at low altitude. This intruder had no lights and, although one guard later said he had briefly heard the sound of a helicopter, none of the observers could positively identify the type of aircraft involved.

After the security police notified the command post of this dramatic development, the 379th Bomb Wing's Vice Commander, Col. John J. Doran,

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was hurriedly driven to the base's flight line—although a safe distance from the WSA—accompanied by Wing Commander Col. Boardman. What they observed when they arrived, if anything, is not recorded. After perhaps five minutes, the unlit craft moved away from the Weapons Storage Area, in a northerly direction, and turned its lights back on. A short time later, the base began tracking two unidentified objects on radar, but they were moving southeast, at low altitude.

Col. Boardman quickly ordered the pilot of a KC-135 tanker aircraft approaching the base to divert his course and attempt to get close to, and identify, the unknown craft. One of those onboard the tanker, Navigator Instructor Capt. Myron Taylor, later gave a formal statement about the intercept attempt, saying that two objects with flashing lights had eventually been sighted, and that one them had been tracked intermittently on the aircraft's radar as it moved ahead of the tanker out over Lake Huron and later Saginaw Bay.

Taylor said the objects were about one mile in front of the aircraft and would speed away whenever the tanker tried to get closer. After a few minutes, the object being tracked on radar left the vicinity at high velocity. Taylor stated, "I know this might sound crazy, but I would estimate that the UFO sped away from us doing approximately 1000 knots." Whatever that object was, it was obviously not a helicopter. Apparently, the two unidentified objects were functionally identical, operating in concert, and one of them had earlier hovered over the Weapons Storage Area for unknown reasons.

Another Encounter at the Wurtsmith WSA?

In 1996, I interviewed a former member of the 379th SI'S K-9 unit who was at Wurtsmith AFB during that period. This individual claimed to have been present during a dramatic UFO incident at the base Weapons Storage Area. However, after listening to his account, I was left wondering whether he had been involved in a very similar but entirely different UFO event at Wurtsmith's WSA. I questioned this person at length and frequently challenged his statements, nevertheless, the details he provided remain much different than those surrounding the incident of October 30, 1975-

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Regardless, I have records confirming his assignment with the 379th SPS and consider him to be a credible source. He spoke to me on the condition that he would remain anonymous. I will call him "John Erikson.''

Erikson was at Wurtsmith from January 1975 to August 1976. He didn't remember the date of the UFO incident but said that he had been posted "across the street from the Weapons Storage Area" when he suddenly overheard excited radio chatter from other SPs, to the effect that a "bright light" was directly above the WSA. (During the October 30, 1975 incident, the object had been described as completely unlit and nearly invisible.)

His voice rising, Erikson told me, "But I couldn't see the light myself, and I was right there!" He seemed very puzzled by this and said, "That was one of the strange things. I was standing out in the middle of nowhere, with nothing around me taller than a chain-link fence. I was nowhere near trees or anything like that. I kept looking around and looking around but couldn't see a UFO...[Meanwhile] one police post after another reported seeing the light. About ten or fifteen minutes into these reports...I heard someone say that the [air traffic control] tower could see the light but they didn't have it on radar." (During the October 30, 1975 incident, personnel at the tower reported that while they never had visual contact with the UFO, they had later tracked it, after it left Wurtsmith's airspace. In other words, just the opposite.)

According to Erikson, the unidentified light was extremely bright and was hovering "right over" the WSA at very low altitude. It apparently acted like a helicopter but made no noise. After several minutes, Erikson heard someone on the radio say that jet fighters had been scrambled from K.I. Sawyer AFB, in northern Michigan, to attempt an intercept of the object. At the time, Sawyer hosted the 87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, which flew F-106 Delta Dart Aircraft. (No fighter intercept attempt was mentioned in the declassified documents relating to the October 30, 1975 UFO incident, only the intercept by the KC-135.)

Erikson said the light remained over the WSA even as the jets arrived at Wurtsmith, but rapidly left a short time later. Again sounding puzzled, he said, "I couldn't hear any jets!" Regardless, Erikson said that after the light moved off, "the tower kept relaying information to our security police shift supervisor [and then] he would call on the walkie-talkie and let people know

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where the jets were and where the object was. Apparently, it just kind of hung out in front of [the fighters] for awhile, maybe three or four minutes, but eventually it took off."

According to Erikson, when the SPs returned their weapons after their duty shift, they were instructed by the shift supervisor not to discuss the incident, except with Air Force investigators. He said the base went on increased security for about a week after the incident. Erikson was never interviewed by OSI, or anyone else, and he never heard anyone mention Air Force or civilian helicopters as a possible explanation for the light hovering above the WSA.

I asked Erikson if he were in contact with any other former members of the 379th SPS, whom I might interview. He told me he was not, and said that he wished to remain anonymous because he believed the incident at the Weapons Storage Area was still classified. However, he did grant me permission to publish his account on the condition that he would not be identified.

While it's possible that Erikson had misremembered, after 20 years, certain of the details relating to his experience, and was in fact recalling the well-documented October 30, 1975 UFO incident, I have my doubts. As noted earlier, a UFO appeared at the Loring AFB WSA on two successive nights. Did a second UFO incident also occur at Wurtsmith—perhaps later that fall, or even during the following year—thereby exempting it from the declassification grudgingly conferred on the other Northern Tier case reports?

Regardless, I consider Erikson to be a credible source, despite the curious details relating to his inability to see the bright light, as the other guards could, or to hear the approach of the jet interceptors. Indeed, I would argue that these counter-intuitive elements actually lend legitimacy to his account. In my view, it seems unlikely that he would have invented such odd, seemingly inexplicable details if he were attempting to convincingly establish his presence at the WSA during the alleged incident. If he were being deceptive—that is, trying to write himself into the Wurtsmith UFO story, so to speak—he would have almost certainly told me that he too had seen the UFO and had heard the jets. But he did not.

Moreover, I will note that similar baffling testimony is to be found in other

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UFO sighting cases. For example, a retired New Mexico State Policeman, Gabe Valdez, once told me that during the 1970s, he and a Jicarilla Apache Tribal Policeman had approached, from different directions, an extremely bright UFO hovering at low altitude. The two men were in their police cruisers, communicating by radio. According to Valdez, suddenly the other cop could no longer see the UFO—even though only flat, open terrain separated them. Valdez told me, "I kept yelling into the radio, 'It's right there! Can't you see it?!' It was really bright! There's no way he couldn't have seen it, but he said he couldn't."

In other words, Erikson's experience—during which he could not see the UFO while others who were present did—is not unique. Perhaps what he, and Valdez, have described is an as-yet unexplained psychological phenomenon whereby, for unknown reasons, one or more—but not all—sighting witnesses are in some way prevented from experiencing the entire UFO encounter. Furthermore, it must be noted, in some sighting cases, there are other reported psychological anomalies as well. In a later chapter, I will discuss another credible sighting report at a nuclear weapons site, during which some form of mental manipulation was seemingly present—presumably originating from those aboard the UFO—resulting in an inappropriately relaxed psychological state in some but not all of the sighting witnesses, in spite of the obviously terrifying nature of the incident.

In any case, if Erikson was indeed involved a separate UFO incident at Wurtsmith in the mid-1970s, no declassified documentation currently exists to support his account. On the other hand, the October 30, 1975 UFO incident at Wurtsmith's Weapons Storage Area is well-established and, in the context of the other Northern Tier Base sightings that fall, hardly surprising.

A Beam of Light at the Loring AFB WSA

In 1977, less than two years after the rash of sightings at SAC bases in the fall of 1975, another UFO incident apparently occurred at a nuclear weapons storage site. James M. Dunn, then a Senior Airman stationed at Loring AFB, Maine, told me, "It probably happened in the early summer. I was K-9, with the 42nd Security Police Squadron. I was on the midnight shift and I was regularly assigned to the Weapons Storage Area, where they kept the nuclear

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weapons. I guess it was probably between one and three in the morning, a clear night, kind of warm. I was sitting in my gate shack, eating my 'bag-nasty'—these little packed lunches—that were pretty bad."

"All of a sudden, I got a call from Entry Control, the unit at the entry of the WSA, saying, 'Hey, K-9, or whatever code they used—I can't remember, K-2, K-4, whatever—can you go check on the area commander? We've got a bright light shining down into the Weapons Storage Area, at the north end of the battery.' So, I climbed up on the grassy mound covering one of the weapons storage bunkers and looked north, in the direction of the entry to the WSA. Sure enough, I saw what looked like a bright light shining down onto his vehicle. Even my dog kind of reacted—he cocked his head a little bit. I cannot recall actually seeing a 'beam' of light—like a flashlight beam would be visible in the fog—but the light seemed to be pointed down to the vehicle at about a 45-degree angle. The truck itself did not appear to be illuminated, but the interior of the cab seemed to glow a greenish hue, although the light itself was intensely white, bright, and had almost a starburst pattern to it. And then, poof, the light was out. Maybe it was five or six seconds [after I saw it]."

Dunn continued, "So, I started walking, really fast, up to where his truck was. [Sgt. G------] was just sitting there with a stunned, disbelieving look on his face, not reacting to me. So, after a few seconds, I said, Hey, Sarge, what was that?!' He said, 'Dunn, did you see that?!' I said 'Yeah, what was it?' He said, 'Did you see anything?' We started looking around the sky. Nothing. There was no noise, dead silent. Even when the light was there, there was no noise at all. Totally quiet. Maybe four or five minutes later, two F-106 interceptors, from the tactical part of the base, came screaming over us, right over the Weapons Storage Area. The base had gotten some kind of bogey on their radar. Then we heard later that the thing was too fast, they couldn't get it, and it just disappeared."

I asked Dunn, "Who told you that?" He replied, "Actually, I went over to the tactical guys, at the pilot bay, and they went, 'Negative contact on the bogey. Whatever it was, [it was] not anything we made.' Afterward, it was funny, ordinarily if anything comes close to the Weapons Storage Area, there's an alert, you know, because its nuclear weapons, but none of that happened."

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“I talked to the sarge later and he told me he had the feeling that [the light] wasn’t a threat. It’s kind of hard to explain but—he knew it was something intelligent—but not threatening. I had that feeling too, I don’t know why. Even when I was standing next to his truck, just after the light disappeared, I knew that there was no threat to the weapons. I don’t know why. It’s funny. I can’t explain it to you, but I knew and Sarge knew that there was no attack going on.”

I asked Dunn, “Are you saying that you both just had a hunch that there was no threat or—” Dunn interrupted me and said, “Uh, it’s a weird one, uh, I was trained to react as a K-9 security [guard], you know, yon radio it in if you think it’s important, but, uh, it’s a hard one to explain, I can’t really tell you why we, uh—we almost got the feeling of non-threat—and I can’t explain that to you. It was a feeling of, this is something beyond a threat, uh...”

Dunn was clearly flustered and, it seemed to me, hesitant to put his thoughts into words, so I asked, “What do you think that something was?” Dunn let out a long sigh and blurted out, “Okay, we thought it was alien. The sarge and I talked about it and we decided it was, uh, alien.” Hun, laughing, he said, “It’s goofy, I know, but...”

I asked Dunn if he or the sergeant had seen a craft of any kind, or, a black space in the sky where the stars had been hidden by an unlit aerial object. He said, “No, just the light. Uh, the sarge told me that he had die feeling that the light had some kind of intelligence, you know, beyond human. He felt—I don’t know if the word ‘communicated’ is right—but he felt that something was imparting, uh, that’s probably where he got the sense [that it was] non-threatening. He said that it was like something was saying, 'You’re not in any harm,’ or something like that.”

I asked Dunn if he had had the same sense. He said, “Uh, no, not like that. I had a feeling there was no threat involved, but not the sense that someone or something was telling me that. [Sarge] told me that he had the feeling, from the light, that he was being dissected almost, or studied. We talked about it later and that’s what he said. I think that’s when we both decided that it wasn't any [kind of aircraft] we make. We were saying, you know, ‘Well, there’s got to be aliens out there.’ We had this one talk about it later on but,

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after that, he didn't seem to want to talk about it."

I asked Dunn if he and the sergeant had been debriefed. He said, "No! That was weird too! It was like everyone wanted to forget the incident. We were willing to talk about it, but no one asked us anything. The higher-ups—no one came to us and said, 'Don't say anything'—but they just didn't mention anything about it, you know, like just forget it." The sarge said the light was visible for maybe 15 seconds, and that it had illuminated the inside of his truck."

I asked Dunn if he or the sergeant had, at any time during the incident, seen the light fall directly on one of the weapons bunkers. He said, "I didn't see that, and [sarge] didn't say anything about it either." This particular question related to a reported incident at an Air Force base in England, in December 1980, which I discuss at length in a later chapter.

To summarize, in addition to maneuvering near ICBM sites in the fall of 1975, UFOs also visited several nuclear Weapons Storage Areas. Bank robber Willie Sutton was once asked, "Why do you rob banks?" Sutton famously replied, "That's where the money is." Apparently, those aboard the UFOs visit Weapons Storage Areas because that's where the nukes are. Beyond this obvious fact, little information currently exists to explain the reason for their interest.

I am, of course, very interested in hearing from individuals who have knowledge of the UFO incidents at the Northern Tier Bases in 1975, or at Loring AFB in 1977. As previously noted, my contact information appears in Appendix A.

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19. Mutilations

Over the last four decades, thousands of gruesomely mutilated cattle have been found throughout the United States. Most of these still-unexplained incidents occurred—and continue to occur—in the Rocky Mountain states, primarily New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana. However, the overall distribution of cases has been widespread, with cattle or other livestock mutilations being reported in most of the 48 contiguous states.

Moreover, hundreds, if not thousands of other cases have occurred around the world, notably in Argentina, where cattle ranches abound. Numerous theories have been advanced to account for these bizarre incidents, including Satanic cult rites, secret government experiments, and the sampling by space aliens of residual radiation or environmental toxins. Not surprisingly, skeptics have dismissed the mutilations as ordinary predator kills, despite ample evidence to the contrary.

While uninformed speculation about this grisly phenomenon runs rile, a handful of researchers, law enforcement officers and livestock inspectors have methodically investigated hundreds of mutilation cases and collected a wealth of forensic data. Although the physical evidence found at the “crime scene” varies from case to case, common mutilation traits include the surgically-precise removal of the animal’s facial hide and flesh, usually only on one side, as well as the removal of one eyeball and the tongue. Udders and genitalia are almost always excised and, in virtually every case, the rectal area has been cored-out in a near-perfect circle, and the tissue removed. The resulting cylinder-shaped cavity extends several inches into the body.

Additionally, there is almost always a complete absence of blood in the carcass and none to be found on the ground nearby. With rare exceptions, human footprints, tire tracks, and helicopter skid marks are never in evidence, suggesting that the cattle are mutilated at one location and air-dropped at another.

On more than one occasion, the mutilated animal has been found on snow-covered terrain. Coyote tracks indicate that one or more of the scavengers had approached but stopped short of the animal, as if some unseen barrier was present. The tracks then warily veer off to one side or the other, tracing a

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wide arc around the carcass, before leaving the area altogether. This is very strange, almost unheard of behavior for a hungry coyote in winter. Some investigators also report that even birds of prey will not scavenge a mutilated animal.

Significantly, in many mutilation cases, ranchers report seeing unusual aerial lights maneuvering over their property, most often on the night prior to the discovery of the dead animal. These move erratically and sometimes hover, and are usually described as appearing much different than aircraft lights, being far brighter and more diffuse. Most of the time, they are accompanied by no discernable noise but, in some instances, helicopter-like sounds are heard. In other cases, ranchers report observing black, unmarked helicopters flying low during daylight—as if searching for something—only hours after the mutilated animal is found. In still other cases, sightings are reported of mysterious helicopters and UFOs.

As noted in the last chapter, during the summer and fall of 1975, several dozen mutilated cattle were found within the nuclear missile field surrounding Malmstrom AFB, Montana—some of them quite near various Minuteman missile launch facilities. In 1993,I interviewed a local ranching couple—they've requested anonymity—who told me they had once discovered a mutilated cow sprawled inside the 10-foot-high security fence surrounding the Minuteman LF located on their property. Someone had apparently air-dropped the carcass nearly on top of the heavy' steel and concrete lid covering the underground missile silo! Was the animal perhaps a morbid calling card? If so, who placed it there, and what would such an act signify?

Between 1975 and 1977, mutilated cattle were also discovered within F.E. Warren AFB's missile field, located northeast of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and extending into the adjoining states of Colorado and Nebraska. One former USAF missile squadron commander stationed there during that era, retired Lt. Col. Philip Moore, told me, "There was a rash of cattle mutilations in northeastern Colorado—in the midst of the 321st Strategic Missile Squadron's missile field—during the first few years I was at F.E. Warren, in the early to mid '70s. The news accounts made many of them sound mysterious. I was the Commander of that squadron in the late '70s and by then the mutilations had stopped. As far as I know, they stayed mysterious

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and were never solved."

Big Mama

These incidents, and others in the region, had been widely covered by the local and, occasionally, national media. One article by Bob Pratt, published by the *MUFON UFO Journal*, reported that in Colorado's Logan County alone, 77 mutilations were found between August 1975 and August 1977. Nearly half of the count)' falls within F.E. Warren's huge missile field. Pratt wrote in part:

Logan County had a fairly heavy toll, with mysterious lights in the sky—dubbed 'Big Mama and the baby UFOs'—often being reported. 'There is a very definite connection between the lights and the mutilations because each time we've had the mutilations the lights have been seen,' Harry L. 'Tex' Graves, then sheriff of Logan County, told me in an interview in his office in Sterling.

Big Mama... 'looked like a huge brilliant star that would sit in one spot in the sky for 10 minutes to an hour and a half and then suddenly disappear at great speed. Sometimes small lights would appear to drop out of Big Mama and then shoot off horizontally and disappear in several seconds. Sometimes, after the little ones drop down, you can look down [toward] the ground and see one, two, three little ones down around there. When the little ones get done with whatever they're doing, then they join up with the big one and they disappear.'

Graves said the object definitely moved across the sky, sometimes hanging motionless for awhile and then moving away very rapidly...Deputy Bob Stone described Big Mama as 'a big, huge white light. Through the telescope, it looks just like a huge circle...'[1]

Another retrospective newspaper article, published in 1977 by the Colorado

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Springs *Gazette Telegraph*, also profiled Sheriff Graves, who had by then investigated dozens of the mutilations. The article, "An Unknown Menace Puzzles Cattlemen", quoted Graves as saying, "It's the strangest thing I've seen in 24 years as a lawman, and I'm not about to give up. I still don't know who is responsible for these crimes, but one thing is certain—whoever or whatever they are, they're nothing but a bunch of common thieves."[2]

The article noted that the nationwide mutilation wave began late in 1974, peaking during the summer months of 1975 and 1976. Although several states were affected, Colorado had been hardest-hit, with the Colorado Cattlemen's Association reporting 1,500 suspected cases.

Unable to solve the mystery, Tex Graves and other county sheriff's sought help from Colorado Governor Richard Lamm who, in turn, ordered the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to conduct a criminal investigation of the mutilations. Lamm also ordered the Colorado National Guard to assist the CBI, tasking it with monitoring any unusual aircraft or helicopter activity over the states ranch lands. Additionally, tissue samples from the mutilated cattle were to be sent to forensic laboratories operated by Colorado State University.

Meanwhile, Sheriff Graves, together with his deputies and sometimes concerned ranchers, spent many a night staked out in remote areas of Logan County, in the hope of catching the perpetrators literally red-handed. Unfortunately, those efforts were to no avail.

Finally, after a nearly three-month investigation, the CBI announced that the so-called mutilations were mostly the result of natural predator activity, with only a few cases attributable to human slayers. This surprising conclusion was quickly supported by the analysts working at Colorado State University, who found that of some 300 cases studied, only nine or 10 showed evidence of human involvement.

This official announcement stunned and outraged law enforcement personnel and ranchers throughout the state. Most considered the conclusions to be preposterous. As a result, many cops and cattlemen stopped listening to the "experts" and quit sending tissue samples to the CSU laboratories.

The *Gazette Telegraph* article summarized Sheriff Tex Graves' own indignant reaction this way:

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In the corner of his office in Sterling is a metal file cabinet. In one of the well-used drawers are more than 200 photographs of mutilated cattle, and they are damning evidence that the state investigators either didn't know what they were saying or were nor telling the whole story.

'Look at these pictures and then tell me how anyone can blame it on natural predators,' Graves urges, 'I'd like to see the coyote that can do that. Predators are never as selective as the mutilators,' Graves says, 'A coyote wouldn't leave all the tender parts, if he tore a piece of hide from the critter's belly, he'd leave it around, not take it with him. And he'd go after the meat under it. At least three of the 74 animals mutilated in Logan County were cut upon while they were still alive, based on the evidence we've collected,' he continues, 'Also, the blood in 29 animals was completely drained from the animal. Yet we seldom find much blood on the ground.'[3]

Clearly, Sheriff Graves was completely unconvinced by the official findings. The newspaper article concluded, "During the summer of 1977, the number of reported mutilations in Colorado decreased drastically. In Logan County, only five were reported." This statement essentially confirms USAF Lt. Col. Moore's recollection that the mutilations had ceased in the missile field by the time he took command of the 321st Strategic Missile Squadron in the late 1970s.

Meanwhile, during the same mid-1970s period, other mutilations were occurring in South Dakota, many of them within the boundaries of the Minuteman missile field operated by Ellsworth AFB. At the time, civilians Bill and Martha Patterson owned a ranch and small general store about seven miles south of Mud Butte, not far from one of the missile launch facilities in Ellsworth's Foxtrot Flight. On two occasions, I was told, the Pattersons had found mutilated cattle on their property and, a short time later, a mutilated calf was found on a neighbor's ranch. These incidents were reported to the Meade County Sheriff's Office, but no further action was taken.

But the mutilation activity was only part of the story. On a number of occasions, the Pattersons saw strange lights flying near, and sometimes

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hovering above, Minuteman Launch Facility F-09, located about a mile from their house. One night in particular, Bill saw a brightly-lit, disc-shaped UFO maneuvering in the western sky, just after sunset. It made no noise, but the Patterson's dogs had barked furiously until the object faded from view. As with most of the other sightings, Bill reported the incident to Ellsworth, but received no feedback from the Air Force.

On another occasion, a missile security "strike team" leader had knocked on their door and asked to borrow their binoculars to look at some bright lights maneuvering in the sky near the launch facility. ^ he did so, the airman commented that radar at the base had detected an object above the LF, and the missile command post had ordered his team to investigate. After he returned the binoculars, the strike team leader left quickly without comment.

Two Moons Rising

Over the years, I have interviewed several law enforcement officers in New Mexico, Colorado, Idaho and Montana, who, collectively, had been involved in hundreds of cattle mutilation investigations. Some of them were state policemen at the time, but most were county sheriffs. Their unanimous opinion is that none of those cases could be attributed to natural predator kills, given the nature of the wounds found on the carcasses. Coyotes simply do not chew perfectly circular cores into flesh. Moreover, as noted earlier, scavengers of all types actually appeared to avoid the mutilated animals.

Furthermore, almost all of the cops I spoke with are equally adamant that not a single case they investigated could be linked to human activities—from a forensic, crime-scene point-of-view. One notable exception is now-retired New Mexico State Policeman Gabe Valdez, who found incriminating evidence of apparent government involvement at some of the mutilation scenes. These finds will be discussed shortly.

As for the rest of the investigators, they are absolutely convinced that neither government agencies, nor Satan worshipers, nor pranksters, nor publicity seekers, nor sadists are responsible for the cattle killings. One retired county sheriff in Montana, Keith Wolverton, did concede the possibility that unknown persons flying in the infamous black helicopters may have lassoed the unfortunate beasts, hauled them elsewhere for strange

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slaughter, before returning them to their owners' pastures. However, after proposing this scenario, he quickly said that he considered it to be highly unlikely.

On the other hand, all of the law enforcement personnel I spoke with—including Valdez—would not rule out UFO involvement in at least some of the mutilations. In fact, many of the cops, including Wolverton and Valdez, had seen UFOs themselves at one time or another.

One such sighting in particular was rather remarkable, and appeared to have a strong circumstantial link to a cow mutilation. During a 19SS interview with Las Animas County (Colorado) Sheriff Lou Girodo, he told me of especially intriguing mutilation case which had occurred years earlier.

It was not so much the details of the field investigation itself that were interesting, but the events that followed it. The mutilated cow, found by a rancher in the southern part of the county, displayed most of the classic incisions associated with these incidents. With dusk fast approaching, Girodo and a deputy sheriff completed their examination of the animal and were just driving away when they both spotted what they assumed to be the orange-tinged full moon rising from behind a nearby hill. After a few moments, the "moon" split into two identical round, bright orange objects. One of them immediately raced away at high velocity, parallel to the horizon, while the other object slowly descended and disappeared behind the hill. Unsettled, the sheriff and his deputy kept on driving. Said Girodo, "Even years later, if I mentioned the incident to my deputy, he would become upset and not want to talk about it." In any case, Girodo assumes there was a link between the mutilated cow and the unknown aerial objects.

The Rommel Report

(Hint: Really Hungry Coyotes)

In 1979, an ex-FBI agent, Kenneth Rommel, was chosen to direct an investigation into the mutilations being conducted by the district attorneys office of New Mexico's First Judicial District. The inquiry, dubbed "Operational Animal Mutilation," was funded with a grant from the U.S. Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Rommel's 28-year career with the FBI included counter-intelligence work,

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among other assignments; he also investigated bank robberies. How this particular background qualified Rommel for animal mutilation sleuthing is unclear to me.

One article I discovered online, written by a mutilation skeptic, speaks glowingly of Rommel's report, saying it was, "heavily documented, and draws on the expertise of dozens of specialists consulted during the investigation, including: reporters, veterinarians, livestock association officials, paranormal investigators, geologists, chemists, forensic pathologists, pharmacologists, and county, state and federal officials from agriculture, wildlife and law enforcement agencies."[4]

Uh, ranchers? Did anybody think to ask the cattle ranchers about the mutilations? Or about their sightings of strange, silent aerial lights which hovered and flew erratically over their property just hours before their livestock turned up sliced and diced? Apparently not. If such interview; were conducted, their import was conspicuously absent in the Rommel Report's conclusions.

The skeptical article mentioned above further notes that Rommel had "personally inspected the carcasses of 25 reported mutes. In each of these incidents, he reported, 'the rough jagged nature of the incisions, together with the evidence at the scene, clearly indicates that the carcass was damaged by predators and/or scavengers.' He [went] on to say that 'I have found no credible source who differs from this finding, nor has one piece of hard evidence been presented or uncovered that would cause me to alter this conclusion.'"[5]

Given this unequivocally dismissive conclusion, it is not surprising that New Mexico State Policeman Gabe Valdez, and Sheriffs Tex Graves, Lou Girodo and Keith Wolverton—as well as several other law enforcement officers who have collectively investigated hundreds of mutilation cases—completely disagree with Rommel's findings. Apparently, these were not the type of qualified specialists—"credible sources"—from whom Mr. Rommel wished to take testimony or, at least, take seriously. (I will not quote here the derisive, sarcastic, off-the-record comments all of these persons made to me when I brought up the Rommel investigation during my interviews with them.)

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For his part, Rommel does not conceal his own contempt toward the many ranchers and law' enforcement personnel who have dismissed his findings. The above-referenced article quotes him as saying, “The problem is, you’ve got ranchers who see something they’ve never seen before or just ignored, and then you have law-enforcement officials getting carried away. You’ve got Sheriff Num-nutz up in some place where he can’t even find his own police car, saying, ‘It looks like laser surgery,’ and the reporters love quotes like that, so they repeat it. Now, if I were a reporter, I would ask, ‘Sheriff, how much do you know about laser surgery?’”[6]

Well, Mr. Rommel, among the many cops I have personally interviewed over the years, not one has mentioned laser surgery—or confessed to his inability to locate his police cruiser. However, almost all of them have mentioned finding compelling forensic evidence, in case after case, which conclusively ruled-out predator involvement in the cattle mutilation kills they’ve investigated.

(I will also take this opportunity to mention that the FBI’s crime lab was embroiled fairly recently in a high-profile scandal relating to its shockingly shoddy, often invalid forensic work, which jeopardized hundreds of criminal cases. According to the Chicago Tribune, “In the mid-1990s, a lab whistle-blower touched off a broad inquiry over allegations of improper handling of evidence. It led to the firing of several lab officials and the overhaul of protocols and procedures. In May of this year [2004], an FBI analyst, Jacqueline Blake, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of making false statements about following protocol in some 100 DNA analysis reports.”[7])

So, retired FBI Special Agent Rommel, I am curious: In the course of your cattle mutilation investigations, did you ever send any of your field samples to the FBI lab for analysis? Regardless, do you have anything to say about the Num-nutz at the lab mentioned in the article above?

Law enforcement personnel aside, among the ranchers with whom I've spoken, many have mentioned seeing silent, high-velocity, often acrobatic UFOs just hours before a mutilation find. Now, if I were a reporter, I would ask, “Agent Rommel, how much do you know about UFOs, to dismiss them so casually?”

Anyway, uninformed skeptics love the Rommel Report, touting it as

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definitive. One even lauded Rommel as “one of the towering figures” in mutilation research.” However, nearly all of those same persons have never interviewed Gabe Valdez, Tex Graves, et al., not to mention the ranchers who have worked with cattle all their lives, and who know predator kills when they see them. In short, the real, on-the-scene cattle mutilation experts continue to be ignored by the self-appointed experts sitting in their armchairs. Nevertheless, as with many of the other subjects examined in this book, an unbiased investigation of the cattle mutilation phenomenon—one incorporating *genuine* expert testimony—reveals a much more complex and still-unexplained mystery, and one not involving hungry coyotes.

Now, a Really Ominous Theory

A far more worrisome theory, published by the National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS), suggests that cattle “mutilations” are the work of helicopter-borne government scientists who are covertly investigating periodic outbreaks of the devastating, viral-originated animal disease, Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE), which could potentially adversely impact humans food supply. The NIDS report, released in 2003, states, “The primary conclusion of this paper is that the animal mutilation epidemic of 1970-2003 was and is a monitoring operation for an infectious agent that is spreading through the human food chain… The infectious agent, unlike all known viruses and bacteria, is almost indestructible and the symptoms in people appear very difficult to diagnose pre-mortem.”[9]

Therefore, this alarming theory concludes, the U.S. government investigators' unauthorized, clandestine approach to livestock harvesting is designed to prevent public panic while the scientific data continue to be collected. If the NIDS study is on the right track, the TSE epidemic scenario obviously has potentially devastating consequences for some number of the billions of humans who have eaten meat over the last few decades.

However, even if one assumes that the conclusions of the NIDS study have merit, is it not possible that those aboard the UFOs are also aware of the potentially ominous situation and are, therefore, engaged in their own, ongoing livestock-sampling operation—to assess the potential fora viral-related food crisis affecting humans?

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Regardless, I think one can reasonably conclude that government operatives in unmarked helicopters could have had no association with “Big Mama” and her brood, or the numerous other seemingly bona fide UFOs sighted at mutilation sites over the years. According to Gabe Valdez, Howard Burgess once found a significant distortion in the local magnetic field near a mutilated cow on Manuel Gomez’ ranch. How could a secret group of government-sponsored mutilators pulled-off something like that?

Furthermore, if one proposes that the mutilations are exclusively the work of human perpetrators, how is it possible that, over a four-decade period, not even one of them has ever been caught? Is there any other type of crime in human history, large or small, where this has been the case?

And what of the many mutilations which were deliberately conducted (or so it seems to me) within the boundaries of various nuclear missile fields around the U.S.? Was this just an unintended, coincidental overlap with the animal-sampling activity? If so, why would the mutilator,' take the time to drop a dead cow inside the security fence surrounding a Minuteman missile launch facility, as was reported to have occurred outside Malmstrom AFB, in 1975? In my view, that type of provocative behavior is far more suggestive of some kind of taunting admonishment, by someone, rather than the by-product of a covert, disease data-gathering operation. (Or maybe it was just a simple predator kill. Maybe a really big, really strong coyote heaved the dead cow over the 10-foot high fence. Right, Mr. Rommel?)

In summary, whatever the actual origins and purposes underlying the animal mutilation phenomenon, the widespread UFO activity at nuclear missile sites in the fall of 1975 was certainly not the last to be reported. In fact, the next case I will describe, occurring some three years later, is exceedingly dramatic and perhaps without peer, at least as regards my own research.

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20. Like a Diamond in the Sky

The following report is extraordinary. The source is highly credible and the importance of the incident is self-evident. Simply put, this case is among the most fascinating I have encountered during my decades of research into nuclear weapons-related UFO sightings. It all began with an email:

-----Original Message------

From: John Mills

To: Robert Hastings

Sent: Sunday, March 05, 2006 4:26 AM

Subject: Re: UFO sightings at 1CBM sites and WSAs

Mr. Hastings,

Since I'm retired, and no longer held accountable to the National Security 10 year no-talk list, I can tell you I have seen and heard of plenty unexplained phenomena in the missile fields. I was stationed at Ellsworth AFB, SD in the late 70's; Vandenberg AFB, CA in the early 80s; Grand Forks AFB, ND in the middle 80's to early 90s and Malmstrom AFB, MT in the early 90's. I spent over 11 years in the actual missile field before being promoted to a desk job.

If you can find the data, check out the winter of 1979, Delta flight at Ellsworth AFB. If you want further details, we might want to talk in person, or via a hard line. All of Echo and most of Delta flights. I was on Delta 6 at the time.

John Mills

According to now-retired USAF Technical Sergeant John W. Mills III, die

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events described below occurred in very late December 1978, or early January 1979, outside of Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, at one of the base's remote Minuteman missile launch facilities. At the time, Mills was an airman assigned to the 44th Organizational Missile Maintenance Squadron (OMMS) and a member of a missile targeting team.

After I interviewed Mills, he provided me with various USAF records relating to his assignment, including security clearances and performance reviews. Given the astounding, almost unbelievable nature of the UFO incident he reports, I will first briefly excerpt some of those files to establish his professional expertise and psychological stability.

One document describes Mills' duties this way: "Performs a series of precision angular measurements to establish an accurate heading of Minuteman missiles… Loads the onboard guidance and control computer with essential launch and targeting information using pre-programmed tapes."

Mills' performance reviews are impressive. In one, covering the period I March 1978 to 28 February 1979, Mills' superiors had rated his performance in the most favorable terms. The reporting officer, a 2nd Lieutenant—whom I must not identify—concluded the performance review by writing: "Airman Mills performs his duties in an outstanding manner...SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENT: Airman Mills would make an excellent Combat Targeting Team Chief."

This recommendation for promotion and assignment was approved. By the summer of 1980, Mills was a Staff Sergeant and being evaluated for further promotion. As a part of his review for the period 19 January 1980 to 14 August 1980, various superiors had commented upon hi' performance and evaluated his potential. While I have been asked to withhold the identities of those persons, their comments are noteworthy.

A sergeant wrote, "Sgt Mills' adaptability to stressful situations and maturity have made him a tremendous asset to the [missile targeting] branch as well as to the [missile] wing. He continually strives for excellent in all facets of duty performance. This is exemplified by having 100 percents on paper work audits on 15 [missile launch] sites without any errors. Recommend promotion as soon as possible."

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A major wrote, “Sgt Mills is a highly qualified Team Chief whose extensive system knowledge and dedication makes him a very valuable asset. His efforts during the SAC worldwide readiness exercise “Global Shield” were particularly noteworthy and greatly enhanced the wing’s ability to place 100% of assigned missiles in alert for simulated execution. Promote [him].”

In short, John W. Mills III was hard-working, an expert in his field, and highly-rated by his superiors. Even so, he was not prepared for what he experienced one night while working in Ellsworth AFB s missile fields. In many ways, it would change his life forever.

During two taped interviews, combined here, Mills told me,

I was an Airman 1st Class at the time, part of a two-man Combat Targeting Team. A week, maybe two, after Christmas 1978,I was dispatched out to the Delta missile field, to do a targeting alignment procedure called RMAD (Reference Mirror Azimuth Alignment), which measures earth movement—whether the site has moved or not—so that the targeting would be accurate. My team chief was on Christmas leave so I was paired with a temporary chief, 2nd Lt. ------. We were on-site at Delta-3. It was about 6 to 6:30 at night, pitch black, one of those cold winter nights in South Dakota.

The RMAD procedure is very sensitive to vibration. Our guard, who was topside, suddenly started banging on the ladder. We were screaming, ‘No, no, no! Don’t ever do that! Now we have to reshoot the set!’ But he kept banging on the ladder and started screaming at us. He said, ‘You’ve got to get up here now! Either you come up or I’m coming down!' Well, the cops were never allowed below grade.

So, my team chief and I went up the ladder, really frustrated. We were screaming at this kid. He said, ‘You tell me what’s going on here!’ It was then that I noticed this low-frequency hum. I don’t know what it was—I’ve never heard anything quite like it. It wasn’t like a hum from machinery. It was coming from everywhere. It was loud! You could feel it on your skin. It permeated everything—you could feel it inside you. You could feel it in your

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teeth. It was like a microwave except it wasn't heating you up. You could feel it vibrating off the [Launch Facility's] access hatch. The truck [parked next to the access hatch] vibrated. You could feel that reflecting onto you.

We asked the kid, 'When did this start?' He said, 'Five minutes ago.' He told us he had already called the Flight Security Controller and reported the hum. He thought the [missile site's] diesel generator was breaking down and had reported it. According to procedure, the FSC should have called the crew in the [Delta Flight launch] capsule and then they would have called us. But that didn't happen for some reason. Instead, the cop was apparently told to contact us directly. That's when he started banging on the ladder. So, we went upstairs, really angry about the RMAD being ruined. Then we heard the hum too. We thought there had to be a logical explanation. At first, we agreed with the cop that something had gone wrong with the generator.

Then suddenly the kid starts freaking out. He was going nuts! He said, 'Look up!' We looked up. All I saw was black. He said, 'Look to the East.' We did. We saw stars. He said. 'Look to the North.' We did. We saw stars. He said, 'Look to the West.' We did. We saw the light from [the town of] Wall. He says, 'Look to the South.' More stars. Then he said, 'Now look up!' We did. No stars. Nothing, just black. We said, 'It's just clouds.'

By now, we're ready to kill this kid. He said, 'Follow me.' We walked to the north side of the site and went up to the gate. You could hardly hear yourself think, because of the hum. Then we saw it. There was a straight-edge in space. On one side, there were stars, on the other side, it was black. That floored us! But again, we were trying to be logical, you know, maybe some idiot parked a barrage balloon above the site. Looking back, I was thinking really stupid things, trying to explain this thing we were seeing.

But we weren't scared. We were just puzzled. We went out of the gate. Now that we're talking about all of this, it occurs to me that we couldn't hear the hum once we opened the gate and walked off-site. It wasn't outside the site,

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at least it wasn't as loud. I seem to recall hearing my boots crunching through the snow once we were outside. And I think I was talking to Lt.------ and the guard. Huh, it just dawned on me that I had forgotten that until now. But on the site itself, you couldn't hear yourself walking through the snow, and you could barely hear each other talking—all you heard was the hum.

Anyway, [once we were outside the gate], we walked along the edge of this dark thing to its end. There was a corner, where the edge turned and went another direction. It wasn't 90-degrees, it was maybe 60- to 70-degrees. But it was a hard corner. So we turned left and followed that edge. By now, we were about 80-feet west of the entry road. Well, we kept walking and followed that edge to the end, which was back over the site.

Of course, by now, we knew it wasn't a cloud, but you could not see what it was! We turned at that corner and walked, maybe a hundred feet, until that edge turned a corner. I do remember walking to the north side [of the site], and exiting the gate, then heading west, south, east and returning to the gate to get back in. Anyway, the object was not a triangle. It looked like it was four-sided, like a parallelogram or a rhombus [which is diamond-shaped]. But you couldn't tell how high it was.

So, we went back on the site and closed the gate. By then, the noise was deafening. Still, we weren't scared, just perplexed and maybe apprehensive. We had heard rumors about UFOs, and we had heard that people had been discharged for reporting them. I began to wonder if it was some kind of SAC exercise. If it was, we were in trouble. You are not allowed to go off-site, and we had walked out the gate. So, I was concerned we would get in trouble.

As I listened to Mills' account, it seemed to me that his thoughts and behavior that night were strangely inappropriate for the situation at hand. While his attempt to comprehend the object in familiar terms is perhaps understandable, his relative lack of fear struck me as bizarre. Given the looming, even menacing presence of the dark shape hovering overhead, and

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the increasingly oppressive humming sound, one would think that he would have been far more concerned, if not completely terrified. And yet—although the guard was apparently very frightened—Mills and his Combat Targeting Team partner were basically going about their business in a relatively calm and orderly manner.

Over the years I had read about various close-proximity sighting cases during which one or more witnesses had inexplicably reacted to the presence of the UFO in a strangely calm, almost nonchalant manner—as if some sort of mental-conditioning field was present, capable of suppressing emotions such as fear. But I had never personally interviewed such a witness before.

One will recall the statements of former Minuteman launch officer Bob Salas, regarding the missile shutdown incidents at Malmstrom AFB in March 1967. Salas told me, "[I later interviewed] a person who was out in the field working to put the Echo Flight missiles back on line. His statement was that he had been called topside by a security guard shortly after he began to go through his targeting and alignment procedures. Once outside, he saw a round orange glowing object hovering 'not far out' at about 30 degrees from the horizon, which was witnessed by the security guard as well. He stated that he did hear a low-level hum, and could definitely feel the energy field [emanating] from the object, bur did not feel threatened by it. He then went back down to continue his procedure—which seemed odd to me, in light of what he just saw. You would think he would have been terrified, but he said he wasn't."

The similarities between this witness' experience and the one reported by Mills are striking. In any case, I mentioned to Mills my incredulity over his apparent nonchalance during the incident. He replied,

This may seem strange but we figured, well, this thing is not hurting us, so we walked back to the personnel access hatch [to go down into the missile silo]. As I was about to descend the ladder, the lights went out. The topside lights, and the lights downstairs. Then the truck quit. We always let the engine run in winter, the whole time we were working, so we could leave the site when we were finished. The Air Force-issued batteries were terrible. We always had the guard run the truck for 15 minutes, turn it off for 15 minutes, and

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then run it again, the whole time we were on site. When the truck suddenly died, the guard tried to call the LCF on his radio. It didn't work.

We got flashlights from the truck and they worked. We figured the back-up generator would kick-in and get the lights back on, but that didn't happen. There are tertiary batteries down in the Launcher Equipment Room, if the generator doesn't work, to keep the site up, but the site was dark. By now, we were more than perplexed. We were freaking out. But not because of the object—we figured we were going to be in trouble for having a site drop-off alert while we were on it. We tried to start everything back up but couldn't, so we went back upstairs.

When we got back outside, the humming had stopped. But the object, whatever it was, was still above us. Then—I don't know how much later, five minutes, thirty minutes, I don't know—the lights came back on. The generator started cranking. That's when I noticed that the object was gone, and you could see the stars overhead. We never saw it leave.

We went back downstairs. The site was down. As far as I could tell, it was a G&C (Guidance and Control) NoGo. I got my control monitor and cable set and began a [missile] start-up procedure. That's when the [LCF] called. They were screaming at us. They said, 'What did you guys do?!' We told them, 'We didn't do anything, the site just lost power.' We didn't mention the object. We told them that we would get the site back on line, and we had to finish our RMAD. By now, Job Control had called and they were screaming at us. We were long overdue to leave the site and proceed to the next one, to do the RMAD on that one, so we figured they were upset about that. But Job Control said, bring the site up, finish your RMAD, but as soon as you're finished, we want you back on base.

We went, 'Uh oh.' We began getting our story straight right then: We didn't see anything, we didn't know anything. The site just lost power. So we went back to the base. On the way, we told the cop, 'This is how we're going to

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play it—we didn't see anything...' and so on. He said, 'Okay. I understand.' When he called the FSC to report the hum, he'd said that he thought the generator was acting up. He hadn't seen the object overhead yet, so he never mentioned it, thank God!

There were two other targeting teams out that night, at Echo Flight. Lt. ------ headed up one of them. I forget the name of the officer on the third team. They had been called in too and we all got back to base around the same time. We talked with the other teams, before we were debriefed. We found out that Lt. ------'s team had the same problem we did. They were doing RMADs over at Echo Flight. They told us that they saw something [directly above their site] and what they described was very similar to our something. They had an identical experience. Their lights went out, their site went off alert. The third team saw something too.

Now, after we dropped-off our equipment, we went back to the [missile maintenance] hanger. The entire building was full of people. There were colonels—we didn't have a general on the base at that time—but the missile Wing Commander was Ralph Spraker. He was there. Colonel Stone, the Deputy Commander of Maintenance was there. My commander, Fenimore, he was there. [The targeting teams] were all divided and conquered. They separated the enlisted men from the officers, they put us in separate rooms and they told us to fill out a report—an official inquiry—of what went on. That way, you can't get your story straight, unless you already got it straight [before you arrived]. I filled out the report, about what we didn't see. I gave my statement, my team chief gave his, and I guess the cop gave his.

So, for the record, we didn't see anything. But [I later learned that] Lt. ------ and his team told the truth. They said they saw something, and heard something. They said they didn't know what it was, but they admitted that something [unusual] had happened. His team was told, 'Keep your mouths shut.' They signed a national security agreement—agreeing not to talk about the incident. So, they signed their statements and went about their business. But Lt. ------ got passed over for captain. He was in the reserves. Ordinarily,

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if reserve officers did well, they would be promoted. But ------ was passed over. He had an absolutely splendid record. Nobody had a bad word to say about him. But he was history.

The [third] team—they were new and I didn't even know their names—they also admitted that they saw something, I don't know, maybe it was just lights in the sky, but they were bragging about it. Well, they were gone. Twenty-four hours later, they were gone [from Ellsworth]. We never saw them again. We didn't know what happened to them.

Me, I kept my mouth shut and got my career and retired. [My temporary team chief] is still on active duty. The last I heard, he was a full colonel. We kept our mouths shut. We made it, the other teams didn't.

I asked Mills if OSI had been involved in the debriefings. He said, "No, I never saw anybody in suits. (OSI agents are alleged to dress in civilian clothes when debriefing UFO sighting witnesses.) I talked to Colonel Stone. He questioned [our team] separately and together. Our stories were similar, but different enough to be believable. That was the last duty I had with Lt. ------. I was assigned to the [missile maintenance] shop for about a week and then re-assigned to my normal duties. So, I went about my business. That was in December 1978, or January 1979." Mills continued, "But later, after this had settled down, these two officers approached me—they were former Combat Targeting officers—who told me that all of Echo Flight had gone down that night, and part of Delta [Flight] went down, even Delta-1, which was the squadron command post for the 66th [Strategic Missile Squadron].

At first, I thought that the two officers were probing—to see if I would change my story—but after awhile I decided they were just curious. We were just shooting the breeze, you know? They said, 'So, your site went off alert. You think that's bad? We lost 12 or 13 missiles that night.' I was stunned. I said, 'You're kidding! I was only aware of three.' They said, 'Oh no, all of Echo and two or three in Delta went down, plus D-1.' By the way, the two missile crew who were at D-1, they told the truth [during the debriefing] and they disappeared too."

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I then asked Mills whether the officers who told him about the missile shut-downs had mentioned that UFOs were involved. “No, that terminology was never used. Never once did I hear that term, even during the debriefing. We talked about ‘anomalies’, you know, we asked each other, ‘Did you have any unknown anomalies?’ Later on, we were trying to explain to a bunch of pencil-pushers how a three-tier power system with commercial, diesel back-up, and batteries [at each of the missile sites] could completely fail all at once, and then become functional again. You know, I said, ‘I’m trained on this system, and I can’t figure out how a you can have a simultaneous failure on all three systems, and then have them all magically reappear.”

After taking Mills’ statement, I asked him if he would be willing to contact former Air Force colleagues—those who were not still on active duty—in the hope that some of them would go on-the-record too. A few weeks later, I asked him if he had done so. He replied, “I sent emails to a host of friends about D-3 and their responses were terse at best. One good friend said I was crazy to even bring it up, since I signed the so-called “John Walker” classified release form at retirement. A very good friend of mine who knew about the incident said he wasn’t interested in answering any questions, as he didn’t want to lose his retirement [benefits].”

Without my knowledge, Mills had also contacted the individual who had been his temporary Targeting Team Commander on the night in question. Personally, I would have preferred that lie had not done that, since the former commander was still in the Air Force and now < colonel.

Afterward, Mills told me, “I think I made a big mistake. I had the colonel’s e-mail address so I wrote to him. He’s at ------, doing -------. He was very terse with me. He was very, very upset that I had spoken with yon about the incident at D-3. He basically said, ‘You and I had an agreement 30 years ago that the incident never happened! We agreed that we would never discuss it again!’ When I say he was terse’—it’s a polite way of saying he was really angry. In fact, he was beyond bent.”

Several months after I interviewed Mills, I was able to locate the individual who headed-up one of the other targeting teams working in the missile field on the night in question. He was the reserve officer who, during the debriefing in the hanger, admitted to seeing another UFO at one of the Echo

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missile sites. According to Mills, coincidentally or not, the officer was later unfairly passed-over for promotion and left the Air Force soon after.

I was unable to reach this individual by telephone, so I wrote a short letter to him. I simply said that John Mills had given me his name, I told him that I researched events relating to Minuteman missile deployments during the Cold War era, and then asked if I could interview him. I never mentioned UFOs. Although I provided my phone number, he never responded.

Six weeks later, I sent a second letter. Thinking that I had better be more direct, if I were to get any kind of response, I candidly explained why I had contacted him and included a lengthy synopsis of John Mills' testimony. I received no response of any kind—no denial that the events had occurred as Mills portrayed them, no sarcastic comments about UFO nuts, no nothing. So, I gave up. As much as I would like to have confirmation about the events portrayed by Mills, I certainly do not intend to harass this person with further inquires. I do, however, have another possible source to locate: the enlisted man who served under this former officer on his targeting team. I am currently working that lead.

The Incident at Ellsworth's B-52 Alert Pad

When I interviewed Mills, he also mentioned that he had once observed another UFO while he was stationed at Ellsworth AFB. Although that incident was far less dramatic than his experience at the Delta-3 Launch Facility, the sighting was nevertheless intriguing and the official efforts to suppress information about it afterward are certainly noteworthy.

The second sighting didn't occur at a missile silo, but on Ellsworth AFB itself. During the interview, Mills speculated that the UFO had been probably been near the base's nuclear Weapons Storage Area (WSA) when he first noticed it. However, after later reviewing aerial photographs of Ellsworth AFB, he wrote to me and set the record straight: "Apparently it was the B-52 alert pad, not the WSA, where the object started out from. The rest [of my statement] is correct."

Mills' voluntary admission of his earlier error, and his subsequent clarification, suggests that he was endeavoring to be as accurate as possible in his recollection of the sighting. With the above-noted correction in mind, I

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present here Mills' initial comments to me regarding his second UFO sighting:

There was also another incident at Ellsworth. It must have been the spring, maybe May, 1980. I lived in Barracks 111, which had a clear view of the flight-line. It was one of the days that the SR-71 [surveillance aircraft] landed. It came in on a regular basis to re-fuel and, on that day, we heard that it was in a hanger and was going to take off at some point. Even though [the departure time] was classified, when the word went out that it would be leaving later that day, the flight-line. became crowded with people. It was packed. There must have been three or four thousand people. People brought their families out to see the Blackbird take off. There were cars parked all up and down the main drag, on the road going to the commissary. It's an old B-36 flight line, and there were cars everywhere, even on the hill on the north end of the runway, which was the best viewpoint to see the take-off. Everyone knew that SR-71 was leaving sometime that day. It was an event.

The best view for us was on top of the barracks, so we went up there. Even though that was not allowed, we went anyway. We picked a lock on a door leading to the roof and got up there, as soon as we heard on the radio that the tower had cleared the SR-71 to take off.

Anyway, we were up there for a little while, with binoculars, when someone said, 'Hey, there's something weird over there.' We all looked and saw this object, this triangular object, above the flight line, maybe half-a-mile away. Now, there were some hangars between us and the [B-52 Alert Pad] but we could tell it was in that vicinity.

This was in the middle of the day, maybe early afternoon. Someone looked through the binoculars but couldn't see anything. It was peculiar, you could see this thing with the naked eye but it was invisible through the binoculars. We were starting to ask ourselves if the object was really there. Then it moved. It went past the [B-52] alert area and went right down the flight-line.

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You could sort of see this dark triangle shape, gray-black in color. It was in the air and moving slowly, maybe 500-feet in altitude. It kept moving down the runway. So, we said, 'Oh, that must be the SR-71.' You could see with your eyes it was angular-shaped, maybe like an F-l 17 but on a larger-scale.

So, one of the guys looked at it with the binoculars again but, when he did, he couldn't see it. Every time we used the binoculars, it was invisible. I can't explain that, unless it was some prismatic effect. Binoculars have prisms in them. I know from my targeting training that certain objects viewed through heat waves can effectively disappear when viewed through optical instruments with prisms in them. It has to do with the way light beams are deflected.

When I was at Vandenberg we shot RMAVs with theodolites, which were prone to the same effect. We had to shoot them in the early morning or the late afternoon. In the middle of the day, the heat waves rising off the ground would make the targets invisible when looking through the scope. You could still see them with the naked eye but, through the instrument, they were invisible because of the prismatic effect. This is a well-known effect. Maybe that's what was going on with this object.

Anyway, the object kept moving down the runway. It then made a right-turn and moved toward us a short distance. It had cleared the flight line and was over some hangars. Then it literally disappeared! It was there, and then it was gone! I don't know what happened to it—if it moved away so quickly you couldn't see it—or what. We looked everywhere but we couldn't see it. There were four or five of us on the roof and we all agreed later on—the object just disappeared. Gone! It was there one second, and then it was not there! It disappeared by the parachute-rigging building which is about three-quarters of a mile north of the alert facility.

The B-52 Alert Pad, above which the UFO was apparently hovering when first observed, was a staging area where several bombers were routinely

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grouped in close formation, to permit tightly-timed take-offs during practice alerts, or in time of war.

Mills said that while on the roof of his barracks, he had noticed other groups of men on the roofs of other buildings, all hoping to catch a glimpse of the SR-71. He speculated that some of them had also seen the UFO but, other than the members of his own small group, he had never talked with anyone else about the sighting. For whatever reason, the SR-71 never took off that day.

Because so many people, perhaps thousands, had assembled near the flight line in anticipation of the Blackbird's departure, it seems likely that at least some of those positioned near the B-52 alert facility also saw the mysterious aerial object.

I asked Mills if the sighting was reported in the local newspaper, or on the radio or TV. "Not that I recall," he said. I asked how such an incident, with literally thousands of witnesses, could have been overlooked. It seemed likely to me that at least a few of the people who had been present would have reported the sighting. Mills replied, "It's common knowledge that there's a symbiotic relationship between air bases and the towns where they're located. The local economy is usually dependent on the base. So. you don't bite the hand that feeds you. If there's going to be bad publicity about something that happened on base, attempts are made at the highest command levels to squelch it in the local media, and the [newspapers and other media] usually comply. I think that's probably what happened here."

Another possible explanation for the sighting, a skeptic might say, was that some conventional aircraft or atmospheric phenomenon had been observed, not a bona fide UFO, so there was nothing to hide. Given the rather large distance between Mills' team and the apparent aerial object, as well as its almost mirage-like quality, such prosaic explanations might be considered legitimate at first glance.

However, there is only one problem with such scenarios: Subsequent events at the base left little doubt that Air Force was fully aware that the UFO was real, and the Pentagon had acted very quickly, at a very high level, to keep that fact as quiet as possible.

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I asked Mills if he had heard any rumors on base about the sighting. He immediately replied, “Oh yeah! The base was lit up! Later that day, there was an official ‘Flash’ message, which said that if anyone had seen anything, or heard anything [about the sighting] they were prohibited from talking to the press about it. Each squadron’s orderly had posted a copy of the message. I remember reading it. Now, I was a peon at the time, 3 senior airman. For someone at my level to be shown a Flash message was like the President of the United States coming over and patting you on the back. You never saw Flash traffic. But, on this occasion, they had it posted in the office. Everyone [in our squadron] read the message as they came in the door, and we were also briefed on it. It was the highest priority. It was that big a deal.

Then, the next day, there was a second Flash message, sent to all SAC bases, saying that the event did not happen. Once again, we were all briefed when we came in for our dispatches. Basically, we were told, 'If you saw something yesterday, you didn’t see it.’ Flash traffic comes from the National Command Authority—only the big guys can use Flash Traffic.” (All military communications are preceded with one of the following designations: “Routine”, “Priority”, “Immediate”, or “Flash”.)

I asked Mills to further explain Flash messages. He responded, “The message traffic would have been sent on the ‘Autodin’—the digital information network—used for written communications. Flash traffic was very unusual and only used for very high-priority traffic, not the usual run-of-the-mill stuff. The message I remember reading was in the Squadron Orderly Room where they posted the normal ‘need-to-read’ stuff.”

He continued, “The National Command Authority (NCA) is comprised of the Secretary of Defense, the President, usually his Chief of Staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. However, I’ve seen other traffic that came through on the Flash band which was sent by the Commander in Charge, Strategic Air Command (CINCSAC) so I must assume that it also comes from all the CINCS and other high mucky-mucks in the Pentagon.

Flash traffic is not only composed of messages for war, or Emergency War Orders (EWO), but also very important information that needs to be disseminated to the troops immediately. I can’t go into specifics on other messages I’ve seen that were Flash, but they were very important stuff. When

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the Titan II [1CBM accidentally] blew up at Damascus, Arkansas, the messages were sent out Flash too. So Flash traffic was command-wide as much as NCA. Its just a way of communicating something very big an(j important without dealing with routine access."

I then asked Mills if he could recall what the Flash message relating t0 the UFO at Ellsworth had said. He replied, "Uh, something like, 'From NCA—National Command Authority—uh, all personnel at Ellsworth AFB will strictly refrain from discussing the incident which occurred on the flight line on such-and-such a date, and such-and-such a time. It is not to be discussed with the media or other personnel. It was pretty vague stuff. No mention of a UFO. But everybody got the message—Combat Targeting, missile maintenance, even the hospital—all organizations on the base. It was the highest priority."

Mills concluded by saying, "Even though we weren't supposed to talk about the UFO, we did. I was a team chief at the time and our group discussed it privately for weeks. I assume that other people on base did the same thing, despite the warning not to. Human nature, I suppose.

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21. Beams of Light

One of the most spectacular UFO cases of all time involved a series of incidents at two neighboring Anglo/American air bases in Suffolk, England, in December 1980. The bases, RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge, were separated by a small forest. Consequently, the multiple UFO events which occurred there are collectively known as the Bentwaters-Woodbridge-Rendlesham Forest Case. However, most people nowadays simply refer to it as the Bentwaters case.

With the exception of the alleged recovery of a crashed alien spaceship at Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947, the intriguing events at Bentwaters have arguably received more media coverage in recent years than any other UFO incidents. While most of the publicity has focused on reports of a landed UFO in Rendlesham Forest, an equally important aspect of the story has usually been downplayed: another UFO was apparently observed hovering above the Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area, where tactical nukes were kept, and reportedly directed laser-like beams of light down into it!

This dramatic incident has been discussed on occasion over the years, somewhat reluctantly, by RAF Bentwaters' Deputy Base Commander at the time, now retired USAF Colonel Charles I. Halt. Although Halt himself observed the UFO sending down beams of light into various areas of the base, he was at the time some miles away, in Rendlesham Forest, and only heard radio chatter about the incident at the WSA. Nevertheless, I believe that Halt's remarks regarding the event are important and warrant further examination. First, however, they must be placed in context.

Because the Bentwaters UFO sightings have been thoroughly reported upon and analyzed elsewhere, I will summarize them here only briefly. On January 13, 1981—some two weeks after the incidents—Lt. Col. Halt wrote a brief memorandum about them titled, "Unexplained Lights." It reads:

1. Early in the morning of 27 Dec 80 (approximately 0300L), two USAF security police patrolmen saw unusual lights outside the back gate at RAF Woodbridge. Thinking an aircraft might have crashed or been forced down,

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they called for permission to go outside the gate to investigate. The on-duty flight chief responded and allowed three patrolmen to proceed on foot. The individuals reported seeing a strange glowing object in the forest. The object was described as being metallic in appearance and triangular in shape, approximately two to three meters across the base and approximately two meters high. It illuminated the entire forest with a white light. The object itself had a pulsing red light on top and a bank(s) of blue lights underneath. The object was hovering or on legs. As the patrolmen approached the object, it maneuvered through the trees and disappeared. At this time the animals on a nearby farm went into a frenzy. The object was briefly sighted approximately an hour later near the back gate.

2. The next day, three depressions 1 1/2" deep and 7" in diameter were found where the object had been sighted on the ground. The following night (29 Dec 80) the area was checked for radiation. Beta/gamma readings of 0.1 milliroentgens were recorded with peak readings in the three depressions and near the center of the triangle formed by the three depressions. A nearby tree had moderate (.05-.07) readings on the side of the tree toward the depressions.

3. Later in the night a red sun-like light was seen through the trees. It moved about and pulsed. At one point it appeared to throw off glowing particles and then broke into five separate white objects and then disappeared. Immediately thereafter, three star-like objects were noticed in the sky, two objects to the north and one to the south, all of which were about 10-degrees off the horizon. The objects moved rapidly in sharp angular movements and displayed red, green and blue lights. The objects to the north appeared to be elliptical through an 8-12 power lens. They then turned to full circles. The objects in the north remained in the sky for an hour or more. The object to the south was visible for two to three hours and beamed down a stream of light from time to time. Numerous individuals, including the undersigned, witnessed the activities in paragraphs 2 and 3.[1]

(Signed) Charles I. Halt, Lt. Col. USAF

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Deputy Base Commander

Halt reconstructed the UFO incidents from memory, and inadvertently misstated the dates they had occurred. The first incident in the forest actually took place around 3 a.m. on December 26th; the second incident began late on the evening of December 27th and continued into the early morning hours of the 28th.

When this memo was declassified via the Freedom of Information Act, in 1983, it sparked widespread media interest and public excitement about the Bentwaters sightings. UFO debunkers, most notably James McGaha, dismissed the mysterious light in the woods as the periodic flashing of a nearby lighthouse. Colonel Halt strenuously objected to this explanation, saying in one interview, "The lighthouse was visible the whole time...it was readily apparent, and it was 30 to 40 degrees off to our right..."[2]

In other words, both the lighthouse and the unidentified light in the woods were observed simultaneously and were clearly distinguishable as two, widely-separated sources of light. McGaha, apparently not willing to be confused by the facts, continues to insist, even now, that the lighthouse beam caused the all the furor. Unfortunately, a great many people, scientists and laypersons alike, who are unfamiliar with Colonel Halts extensive testimony about the incident have unwittingly accepted McGaha's untenable "explanation" as the solution to the mystery.

Significantly, it will be noted that Halt said nothing about the UFO incident at the Bentwaters WSA in his first official statement on the matter. Whatever he may have discussed with his superiors at the time remains unclear. As far as I am aware, Halt's first public statement about the incident at the WSA did not occur until 1991.

Understandably, the WSA was the most sensitive and heavily-guarded section of the base. It consisted of a series of closely-spaced, reinforced concrete bunkers—informally known as "hot row"—in which lower-yield tactical nuclear bombs were believed to be stored. Although that fact has never been officially confirmed by the Pentagon, three of my ex-Air Force sources—one a retired colonel—say it was so.

During that era, Soviet troops based in Eastern Europe greatly

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outnumbered the combined allied armed forces stationed on the continent Consequently, in the event of a Soviet invasion of West Germany, U.S. war plans called for the extensive use of tactical nuclear weapons to thwart the attack. If war had indeed erupted in Europe in the early 1980s, the weapons at the Bentwaters WSA would have undoubtedly been loaded onto nuclear-capable USAF F-16 fighter-bombers and flown to the front.

During the UFO sighting at the WSA, still-unidentified security personnel reported observing a luminous object briefly hovering above the site. Although published reports vary, the UFO apparently sent laser-like beams of light down near—or directly onto—the tightly-spaced weapons bunkers! Shortly thereafter, it reportedly left the vicinity at high velocity.

When Colonel Halt briefly alluded to this startling incident during a 1991 *Unsolved Mysteries* television program, he stated, "We could very clearly see [the UFO]… I noticed other beams of light coming down from the same object, falling on different places on the base. My boss was standing in his front yard in Woodbridge and he could see the beams of light falling down, and the people in the [Bentwaters] Weapons Storage Area and other places on the base also reported the lights."

Some six years later, during a May 13, 1997 interview with journalist A.J.S. Rayl, Halt again spoke of the events at Bentwaters/Woodbridge, including the incident at the WSA. At the time of his own sighting. Halt had been trudging through Rendlesham Forest, leading a team of Air Force Security Police who were investigating reports of strange lights in the woods. He described the remarkable anomalous activity witnessed by the team in his now-famous January 13, 1981 memorandum, but only briefly. During the much longer interview with Rayl, Halt said:

[After leaving the woods, our search team] crossed the farmer's field past his house and across the road, stumbled through a small stream, and went out into a large plowed field. Somebody noticed several objects in the sky to the north—three objects clearly visible with multiple-colored lights on them. The objects appeared elliptical and then they turned full round, which I thought was quite interesting. All three doing that. They were stationary for awhile and then they started to move at high speed in sharp angular patterns as

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though they were doing a grid search. About that same time, somebody noticed a similar object [in the southern sky]. It was round—did not change shape—and at one point it appeared to come toward us at a very high speed. It stopped overhead and sent down a small pencil-like beam, sort of like a laser beam. It was an interesting beam in that it stayed—it was the same size all the way down the beam. It illuminated the ground about ten feet from us and we just stood there in awe wondering whether it was a signal, a warning, or what it was. We really didn't know. It clicked-off as though someone threw a switch, and the object receded, back up into the sky.

Then it moved back toward Bentwaters, and continued to send down beams of light, at one point near the weapons storage facility. We knew that because we could hear the chatter on the [two-way] radio.[3]

Halt further discussed the incident at the WSA during a Sci Fi Channel television program, *UFO Invasion at Rendlesham*, which first aired in December 2003. After some prodding by the show's host, Bryant Gumble, a reluctant Halt stated, "The object to the south [of my position in the forest] was actually sending some beams down near, or into, the Weapons Storage Area. That caused me a great deal of concern. You know, what was it doing there? Was it searching for something, was it trying to—who knows what it was trying to do?"[4] For a split second, it seemed as if Halt would say something like, "Was it trying to zap the nukes?" but caught himself before the words left his lips.

Given these public statements, I decided to approach Halt, in the hope that he would elaborate on the nuclear weapons aspect of the sightings at Bentwaters. Eventually, with the assistance of a friend who is a retired USAF officer, I was able to contact him. After sending me a couple of cautious, non-committal e-mails, Halt finally wrote, "I am agreeable to an interview provided anything used be cleared with me first. There are some subjects that I am not able to discuss, especially issues that relate to [nuclear] weapons."

I quickly responded to Halt, and agreed to his condition of editorial control. However, I also pointed out, regarding the incident at the WSA, I would simply be asking him to elaborate on statements he had already made to

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others. I further promised that I would understand and accept a string of "no comment" responses, if that were the outcome, as long as | could at least ask my questions.

The telephone interview took place on February 7, 2006. I began by asking Halt why he continued to grant interviews to researchers and journalists, some 25 years after the incidents at Bentwaters. He replied "Well, I guess the best way to put it is to get the truth out there. Initially, I wasn't too excited about talking to anybody about it. If my memo had not been made public, I would have remained silent. There was never any attempt to influence what I said [but] at that time, I had no intention of talking to anybody I didn't have to. It wasn't exactly a career-enhancing, uh, opportunity when I stumbled into it. If I had it to do over again, I would have sent somebody else into the woods."

He emphasized, "I have never been warned not to talk about my experience. In fact, no one has officially said anything to me about it, which I find quite interesting. When I left the Air Force I was debriefed because of my security clearances, but that particular issue was never brought up. I don't even think that the people who did the debriefing even knew about it."

I then asked Halt to discuss the incident at the Bentwaters WSA. He replied, "[While we were in the forest] we heard radio conversations on the Law Enforcement frequency, the Security Police frequency, and the Command Network. Now, we were having a lot of problems with the radio. They were really acting up. We were getting a lot of interference and static, but we could hear talk about one of the objects [being] in the vicinity of the Bentwaters WSA. I heard that some of the beams, or whatever they were, came down into the WSA. As I recall, the guard in the [watch] tower at the WSA made that report."

Following the telephone interview, Halt expanded upon these remarks via email. He wrote, "I never told [*Left at East Gate* author] Peter Robbins any structure was penetrated by beams. I was several miles away. From my view, a beam or more came down near the WSA. I don't know for a fact that the beams landed there. I know they were in the area. I was too far away but relied on the radio chatter which indicated the beams landed there. The objects in the sky came from the east and moved west, skirting Woodbridge

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and approaching Bentwaters. When beams came down the objects were closer to the Bentwaters WSA—just to the north of the facility. Only one object came overhead and briefly sent down a beam at our feet. The other three objects stayed just west of us and one or more of them sent down the beams to the WSA. They were far enough away that we couldn't tell which one or how many sent down beams. We could see several beams and members in the WSA went on the radio to report them. Several airmen present later told me they saw the beams. I don't remember any names at this point."

During the telephone interview, I asked Halt, "Were you ever concerned that the UFO was attempting to disable or otherwise compromise the integrity of the nuclear weapons?" He replied, "I can't comment on that, the way you worded it." He then paused a moment and said, "I did have great concern about the purpose of the beams." I then said, "So you wouldn't rule out the possibility that the object was trying to disable some of the weapons?" After another pause, Halt replied softly, "I can't comment about the weapons." Pressing on, I asked a follow-up question, "Did you ever hear any rumors about some of the weapons being removed from the WSA and being shipped back to the United States for inspection?" Halt replied, "I have no comment on that."

Sensing that Halt would not comment further regarding the UFO above the WSA, I changed the subject somewhat and asked if he had ever heard reports of nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents at other bases. Halt replied that he had been approached over the years by several former and retired USAF personnel, who alleged that such incidents had indeed occurred.

"I've had people come forward and tell me about different cases," he said, "you know, this happened at Malmstrom, this happened here, this happened there. They told me [warhead] targeting was changed, weapons were rendered neutral, on and on." Halt said that while he could not personally verify these accounts, he found them very interesting.

At this point, I left the subject of nukes altogether, and asked Halt why he had been somewhat wary of my first contact with him. He said that after he had spoken publicly about his experiences, he had been contacted by some "unusual" individuals. "I've gotten correspondence, occasionally telephone

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calls—now it's e-mails—from persons accusing me of everything from participating in the Second Coming of Christ, to being involved with the Devil. As you well know, there are a lot of fringe people out there with vivid imaginations and bizarre thoughts."

Finally, I asked Halt to briefly summarize his experience. He replied. We saw objects that were under intelligent control." He paused, so I asked, "What was the source of the intelligence?" He replied, "I don't know. It had to be something beyond [human technology] because of they way the objects moved—the speeds, the angles they turned, and the things they did. Could the objects have been remotely-controlled? Certainly." | asked Halt, "So you're saying that it was a technology beyond anything any country on Earth would have?" Halt replied, "I never saw any little green men, but it's possible it was alien technology'. I sure would like t0 have the answers but don't think I'll ever get them."

In 1994, well before my interview with Halt, another retired U.S. Air Force officer told me that following the UFO incident at the Bentwaters WSA, two of the weapons had been removed from one of the bunkers for inspection. That individual once worked for NATO's nuclear weapons security program. I had been introduced to him by a mutual friend who knew of my longstanding interest in nukes-related UFO incidents.

I was aware of the retired officer's background, so I hesitantly asked him if he had ever heard about the Bentwaters/Woodbridge UFO incidents. After warily staring at me for a few seconds, he acknowledged that lie

was familiar with them. Figuring that I had nothing to lose, I plunged ahead and asked him if he had heard the rumors about the UFO sighting at the Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area. Much to my surprise, he confirmed the presence of a UFO near the WSA, confirmed that it had directed a beam or beams of light downward into the bunker complex, and—without any prompting from me—said that he had once read a report stating that two tactical nuclear bombs had been removed from one of the bunkers shortly after the incident and shipped by the Air Force to the U.S. for inspection. I must admit that I was somewhat taken aback by this individual's candor. He concluded his remarks by saying that he was unaware of the findings of this inspection because it had taken place several years before his tenure with

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NATO. Regardless, in light of these comments, it appears that the U.S. Air Force was sufficiently concerned about the condition of the two bombs after the UFO incident to remove them from their bunker for inspection.

Unfortunately, I am not at liberty to reveal the retired officer's identity. However, his credentials relating to his previous involvement with the U.S. military's nuclear weapons security program are a matter of record and I consider his statements to be highly credible.

Witnesses at the Weapons Storage Area

Shortly after I spoke with Colonel Halt, he forwarded two emails he had received from a former radio communications specialist at Bentwaters, Carl Thompson Jr., who told Halt he had indirect knowledge of the UFO incidents at the base's Weapons Storage Area. Yes, *incidents*, plural. That there had been more than one sighting at the WSA was news to me so I quickly called Thompson. He told me,

At the time, I was a Senior Airman with the 2164th Communications Squadron. I was a Radio Relay Repairman. On the first night, Christmas night if I'm not mistaken, I was at the Weapons Storage Area working on a piece of equipment in the [security] tower, trouble-shooting it. I think it was a motion-detection component, used for the security of the weapons. At midnight, the guy who was going to relieve me,---- ---------, called and said that he would come out to the area. So, I went back to the wide-band radio shop and finished up some paperwork.

Now, I don't remember how much later it was, but he called me at the shop and said, 'We just saw a UFO!' He meant himself and the security guards. He was in the security tower cab at the time he called. You could plainly tell he was excited and maybe kind of anxious. He sounded matter-of-fact but also kind of half-scared. I asked, 'What did it look like?' He said, 'It was so bright that you couldn't look directly at it.' So I didn't get any details about its shape, how large it was, any of that. It was just a really bright light. He said it was hovering there for just a few seconds, then it went toward Woodbridge

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so, maybe, that would be in a southwesterly direction.

So, then I asked him, 'Did everybody see it?' He said that everyone had. Then he asked me, 'How am I going to report this?' I said, 'Is anyone else going to report it?' He said, 'No, they're not going to report it.' So, I said, 'How are you going to look, if the others who were right there in the area aren't going to report it? You're going to be on your own. If it were me, I would let it go. I was the ranking person on that night, so I told him, 'I would advise against it, but it's up to you.'

When I saw ---- later that night—he had to order a part for the tower, so we crossed paths—he told me that he'd decided not to report the incident. At the time, we didn't know that the other base was involved. We had no idea that there had been some security police hunting it down, or whatever, in the woods.

I guess it was two nights later, the part for the equipment in the tower came in. We got notified about that just as—was coming on shift, at midnight, so he said be would go out and install it. I stayed at the radio shop. A little while later, it had to past 12:30 [a.m.] since he had to pick up the part first, he called, really excited, and told me that he had just seen another UFO. It had followed the runway, which runs more or less east and west, then it turned, uh, then it turned again and flew directly over the Weapons Storage Area. He said it came right at the tower and was so low that he and the guard hit the deck! He said it had hovered [nearby] for a few seconds, he couldn't say how long, then it slowly moved off, over the trees. He said it was just above them, but then it dropped down into the trees. He didn't see it come back up, so that's when he called me on the land line. He said he heard a bunch of chatter on the radio in the tower—the guard there was talking to someone—and said [the Security Police] were going to have to report it this time because it went down into the woods.

The next time I saw ----, he told me that he had to file a report along with the

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Security Police, at their headquarters. It was only, maybe, 300 yards from the Weapons Storage Area. Later on, it seems like it was a week or so later, he had been called by our squadron commander, Major Cossa, and told to report for a briefing. He was gone most of an afternoon but when he came back he was really agitated. I asked him, 'What's up?' He said, 'Were not to speak about the UFO.' Then he said, really angry, 'I know what I saw!'

He said that during the briefing, someone—he assumed it was the Office of Special Investigations—told everyone there that night they hadn't seen anything. I think that upset—more than anything. They called all the police liars, and all that. He said, 'They told us that we did not see it, and were never to speak of it.' He was really upset. He said [the OSI agents] had talked to them as a group and then talked to them individually. You know, went over their statements with them. He said they told him he was a liar, that he would never have a career, and all that. You know, threatening him. But he told me that he couldn't get into the details. We never talked about it again.

A while later, I tried to ask some of the Security Police about the incident, when I saw them at the Weapons Storage Area, but they were fairly tight-lipped about it. They just told me that when they went into the forest [on the night of December 27/28] they took Light-Alls with them. They said all of a sudden, the lights quit working, the vehicle engines quit, and the radios had a lot of static on them. Then, after a few minutes, everything just started up again. I didn't know much more than that until I saw all of the reports from Colonel Halt and the others on TV. That's about all I can think to tell you.

I asked Thompson, "How do you know the first incident happened on Christmas night?" He replied, "Well, I'm not positive it did, but it was definitely during the holidays, the 25th, the 26th, because—and I were working a longer shift on both of those nights. We were single and [our sergeant] asked us to volunteer for that, so the married guys could be with their families during Christmas. In return, we got some days off in January."

I then asked Thompson if ------- had described seeing one or more beams of

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light coming from the UFO, down into the WSA, on either night. He replied, “No, he didn’t say anything about that.”

Given this testimony, it appears that a UFO was sighted at the Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area on at least two different nights in December 1980, instead of one as previously believed. I have attempted, unsuccessfully, to locate -------. If he happens to read this, I would greatly appreciate an email from him, sent to the address listed in Appendix A.

As mentioned earlier. Colonel Halt told me that he had eventually spoken with some of the security personnel who had been at the Weapons Storage Area the night the UFO directed beams of light into it. “Several airmen present later told me they saw the beams,” he said, “I don’t remember any names at this point.” Given this statement, I attempts] to locate some of those individuals, with interesting if not necessarily confirmatory results.

Using an online roster of former members of the 81st Security Police Squadron, which included their dates of service with the unit, I sent out several emails to persons who would have been at Bentwaters or Woodbridge in December 1980. In each one, I explained who I was and the purpose of my inquiry. I wrote that while I was interested in any information relating to the multiple UFO incidents during that timeframe, I was especially interested in the reported events at the Weapons Storage Area.

The responses I received ran the entire gamut: A few former Security Policemen (SPs) told me that they only had second or third-hand information to offer but wished me well in my research nonetheless. Others recommended that I contact certain individuals who had purportedly been on duty at the WSA and elsewhere on the nights in question, so I emailed all of them. Interestingly, most of those persons never responded so, a week later, I sent a second message to each one, asking whether he had received my earlier inquiry. This flurry of follow-up emails also failed to generate any type of acknowledgment, with two exceptions. One individual finally responded, “I was assigned to the 81st SPS at RAF Bentwaters/Woodbridge. I was a Law Enforcement Specialist. I will not give anyone information about my details or activities from this assignment unless demanded by an authorized legal authority. Any further inquiry will be considered ‘harassment’ Please stop emailing me.”

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Had this wary individual told me that the first time around, I never would have mailed him a second time. Still, I had to wonder what was so important about his "activities" that would cause him to respond so forcefully. I had merely asked whether he had any knowledge of the now widely-publicized UFO activity at the twin bases, which had already been confirmed by many other security personnel, including the deputy base commander. Oh well, to each his own. While I would have preferred some relevant input from this person, I still respect his decision not to talk to me.

In any case, the second individual who answered my follow-up email, Tim Egercic, had been a Security Policemen on D Flight at Bentwaters. He told me, "The night Colonel Halt said he saw a UFO beam lights down into the Weapons Storage Area, I was on duty at the alarm monitor's building, which was located between the double fence that surrounded the WSA. I never saw or heard about a UFO at the WSA, or beams of light, or anything like that."

I responded by telling Egercic that Col. Halt had already acknowledged, during several different interviews he had given over the years, that he had seen more than one UFO moving over the base, and at least one of them had directed beams of light down to the ground. At the same time, he had heard chatter on his radio to indicate that one or more of those beams had fallen within the WSA.

At this, Egercic responded, "Well, I had control of the net. All security transmissions were going though me. Primary Central Security Control (CSC) had passed responsibility over to me, which they would usually do for several hours early in the 2300hrs-0700hrs shift. I had the radio right next to me, and I never heard that a UFO was at the WSA. I do remember hearing [someone at the alternate CSC in Building 679] talking with other SPs and dealing with the strange lights on a different channel. So they were over the forest, yes, but not at the Weapons Storage Area. Believe me, I would have known about that, if it had happened. My responsibility as alarm monitor and [temporary] primary CSC would have been to up-channel a 'Helping Hand'—a possible security violation of a priority resource—to the Wing Command Post had our WSA been breached. Any beams of lights from an unidentified craft onto our Hot Row might have constituted a 'Covered Wagon—a definite breach of a priority resource."

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To make his point, Egercic later sent me an email in which he said that the SP positioned in the WSA's watchtower that night was named Rick Bobo, who had once referred to the phenomenon he witnessed as "The big light show." Egercic then mentioned that Bobo had also told the late Georgina Bruni, who wrote, *You Can't Tell the People*, what he had seen from his vantage point fifty feet above the ground. Upon reviewing the pertinent pages from the book, I found Bruni's interview:

R. Bobo: "I think I was the first to report the sighting that night. I was on the tower at Bentwaters; you get a good view from up there. There were several lights and there was this huge ship over the forest."

G. Bruni: "Can you describe the object?"

R. Bobo: 'I'd say it looked circular but, remember, I was over at Bentwaters and this was happening over at Woodbridge. I was instructed to watch it and can tell you that it was up there for about five hours, just hovering. I would say it was quite low in the sky."

G. Bruni: "Were you alone in the tower?"

R. Bobo: "Someone came to the tower and watched it through a scope. I don't know who he was, he was from a different department. I wasn't told anything and I didn't get to look through the scope."

G. Bruni: "Could you hear the radio transmissions from your location in the Bentwaters tower?"

R. Bobo: "I heard some of the radio transmissions, not all of them, you understand, because there were different frequencies. I heard over the radio that London had spotted something on their radar. I heard some of the radio transmissions from some of the men who were out there. They were reporting

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a light going through the woods, it had bumped into a tree and they were getting radioactive readings from the area. They were discussing three impressions and stuff moving through the woods toward Woodbridge. They kept switching to different frequencies so I couldn't hear everything. I know there was a colonel with them."[5]

Given this exchange, it appears that although Bobo did admit to seeing a "huge ship" and "several lights", he described all the action as having occurred over the woods, and much nearer to RAF Woodbridge than the Bentwaters WSA.

A few days later, Egercic found Bobo's phone number and, after getting his approval, forwarded it to me. In the course of a 40-minute conversation, Bobo confirmed the information he had given to Bruni and provided many more details, some of which appear here. He told me: "As you probably know, the night I saw [the UFOs] I was in the tower at the Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area. The main object hovered out there for a long, long time. It never really moved anywhere else. It was kind of hard to see, but it was slightly oblong, I guess, and I seem to recall it had bluish and reddish lights on it. Not really lights, like aircraft lights, just a tint. It wasn't a star or planet, and it wasn't a lighthouse, as some people claim. I then asked Bobo, "If you held a dime at arm's length, was it larger than that?" He quickly said, "Oh yeah, it was larger than that! I would say it was, maybe, as large as a half-dollar coin held out at arm's length. But I don't know how far away it was, it was so dark that night, I could just make out the forest."

Bobo continued, "Anyway, at the same time, I was listening to all of the radio communications coming from our sister base, Woodbridge. There was lots of chatter on the radio. I think I heard that Heathrow [Airport] had it on radar. I'm surprised no one scrambled a fighter. And, of course, I talked to people too, at our CSC (Central Security Control). It was my job to keep an eye on [the UFO] and to report it if anything happened. Tim [Egercic] had taken [CSC] over before all this started happening, so I was talking to him. And he let me hear some of the chatter from Halts team in the woods. I couldn't switch my radio frequency over to that, but when I called Tim, I could hear some of that on the phone. And I think I talked to Charlie Waters,

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but I'm not sure about that, but I did talk to our area supervisor. That was either Sgt. ["Willie"] Williams or Sgt. [Clarence] George that night. He told me to keep a close watch on the object."

Bobo continued, "When the object first caught my eye, it was already stationary, I didn't see it move to where it was and I didn't see it leave. I never left the tower and I kept a close eye on the object most of the time, you know, trying to figure out what it was and what it might do next."

I asked Bobo if he had observed anything resembling beams of light coming down from the object at any time. He paused a moment, then said, "No, not beams of light. But after it was hanging there a long while, I saw things shooting off it, really, really fast, like little sparks or something. Maybe four or five of them. Little pieces of light, all leaving within a minute [of one another] like they were getting out of there. I hate to say it, but they looked like little ships, like drones maybe, but I don't know. They were shooting off in all directions, but up into the sky, not down to the ground. Right after that, the big object just disappeared. I was watching it, at least I thought I was, but it was just gone. I don't know what happened to it."

This description of the UFO breaking up into smaller ones is almost identical to the one provided by Lt. Col. Halt in his memorandum of 13 January 1981, when he reported the object he and his team saw hovering over the farmer's field. It will be remembered that Halt also told various interviewers that three of the smaller objects had then flown away, two to the north and three to the south. The latter group first moved in the direction of Woodbridge and then on to Bentwaters where, according to Halt, one or more of the UFOs sent down beams of light near or into the WSA, based on the radio chatter he heard at the time.

Given Halts account, I asked Bobo if he thought it was possible that he may have been looking in another direction at the moment one or more beams fell nearby. He said, "I suppose so, but I would have heard something on the radio, unless those reports were on another frequency. I had no indication of anything like that, from what I saw or heard at the WSA."

I asked Bobo how many nights he had been in the WSA tower that week. He replied, "Only one. When we were on at nights, it ran from 11 [p.m.] to seven [a.m.]. The night prior to that, we, D-Flight, were off-duty, on a 24-

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hour break, and before that, uh, we were on afternoons earlier that week." [The afternoon or swing shift was from 4 p.m. to midnight.] I asked Bobo who would have been in the tower the other nights that week but he said he didn't know. I then mentioned the statements made to me by Carl Thompson, of the 2164th Communications Squadron, who reported his co-worker's frantic calls from the tower at the WSA—on two different nights, perhaps two days apart—as he excitedly reported a UFO very near the WSA. In fact, according to Thompson, on the second night, the UFO reportedly buzzed the tower, causing ------- and the guard to "hit the deck."

When I mentioned this, Bobo said, laughing, "That sure wasn't me! There was someone up there with me that night, at least for awhile. But I never saw the UFO that close, uh, coming over the tower or anything like that. I had a 360-degree view. I was looking straight down the row of bunkers when I was looking at the object over the forest."

I asked Bobo whether he had been debriefed after the incident, or threatened by OSI agents, and told to keep quiet about the sighting. Ho replied, "No one talked to me."

In an effort to obtain more information for me, Tim Egercic also emailed another former SP on D Flight, Robert "Charlie" Waters, who had been on duty at the WSA during the week of the UFO activity. Among other things, Egercic asked Waters if he had seen the UFO and, if so, whether he remembered how far away it was from the WSA. Egercic then combined the two emails and forwarded them to me:

TE: Do remember any such claims of a UFO hovering low or high over the WSA?

CW: It wasn't hovering over the WSA. It was moving straight down into the forest.

TE: If so, did you witness any lights being beamed down?

CW: No lights beaming down…

TE: Could you estimate how many miles away the light in the sky was from the WSA?

CW: Based on the what I have heard about the size of the craft, it was maybe

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half-a-mile.

At the conclusion of this email, Egercic wrote, “It does surprise me that [Charlie] thinks it was a half-mile away. That would verify Halts claim of hearing chatter on the radio of strange lights near the WSA, but it doesn’t verify anyone’s claim yet of a UFO beaming lights down [onto] the WSA structures.”

A couple of days later, Egercic sent me Waters’ contact information and I called him. He told me, “There was some commotion in the WSA that night. Someone saw this object, I don’t remember who, and called out to us. I think my ART partner was Rob Isbell, but I’m not certain. But we looked and saw this spinning light—a multicolored light, I can’t really remember the colors—anyway, this craft was hovering and then slowly descended toward the forest. We ran up on one of the berms to get a better view of it. Then we reported it [to Central Security Control]. I remember I used a couple of expletives and was warned not to use profanity on the radio. I think I was talking to a guy named [Alfred] Coakley, anyway, he’s the one I remember talking to most of the time that night. The next morning, I talked to one of the operations officers who told me that [a small group of SPs] had gone out to the woods and had seen some burn marks on trees, about three feet off the ground. He said it looked like, whatever it was, had bounced from tree to tree coming down. The person who told me that wasn’t our flight’s shift commander. He was another officer, but I don’t remember his name.”

I asked Waters if he could remember the timing of his sighting, relative to the widely-reported events in late December 1980. He said, “It was definitely that same week, and I think it was a midnight shift, maybe our last midnight shift [in that group of three]. Anyway, I never heard about any other UFO sightings that week. When Tim [Egercic] mentioned that there had been sightings on four nights that week, that was news to me. I didn’t see anything about all of that until many years later, on TV. But what struck me most was that the way [Penniston and Burroughs] described what they saw—the shape of the craft, which they said was triangular—was nothing like what we saw at the Weapons Storage Area. Also, I think Colonel Halt said they saw [on another night] a big round object that broke into smaller objects. We didn't

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see that."

I asked Waters to describe the UFO he and his ART partner saw using my standard question, "If you held a dime at arm's length, was it larger than that?" Waters immediately said, "Yes! I would say it was, when I first saw it, as large as a, uh, cantaloupe held at arm's length! It was big1 It was spinning and, I think, had a light on the bottom of it, but I'm not sure. I also think I saw something sticking out on the bottom, uh, like a rod or something like that." I quickly asked Waters if he ever saw anything resembling a beam of light coming out of the UFO. "No, nothing like that, at least what I saw. Nothing coming out and going down to the ground, or anywhere else."

I asked Waters if the UFO had ever been over the Weapons Storage Area itself. He replied, "Not that I saw. It never came directly over our heads. It stayed just over the trees and moved [from our vantage point] slowly from right to left until it, I think, disappeared behind them. To be honest, I don't remember where it went, but it was descending when I saw it. It was pretty amazing. I didn't immediately think "alien", you know, I was just perplexed. Also, I remember the animals were going crazy. There were cows mooing and, uh, farm animal noises in the distance. It was almost like they were screaming!"

I asked Waters if he could remember who had been in the WSA's tower that night. He replied, "Not really, it might have been Rick Bobo but I'm not sure...It could have been Dennis Karnatz." [When Tim Egercic later called Karnatz, on my behalf, he denied being in the WSA tower that week, denied witnessing a UFO, but declined to talk to me.]

Because Bobo said the UFO he had seen from the tower lingered in the vicinity of the woods for several, perhaps five, hours, I asked Waters whether he recalled the commotion he saw in the WSA lasting that long, or whether it had settled down soon after he saw the UFO leaving the area. He replied, "I don't recall. After I made my report, I went back to patrolling my area. I figured other people were handling it. I didn't hear much radio chatter after it left, but if [the incident] became a la"' enforcement [issue, not involving the security police] they would have discussed it on another channel and I wouldn't have heard that."

When one attempts to collate the accounts by the former SPs who were on

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duty at the WSA that holiday week, in an effort to create some kind of time-line, it quickly becomes obvious that several key facts are missing, and a number of the available reports do not mesh.

For example, Charlie Waters cannot recall whether Rick Bobo was in [he tower on the night of his sighting and, further, seems to remember speaking to an individual at Central Security Control named Coakley, not Tim Egercic —who Bobo said was working there the night he reported his own sighting to CSC. Consequently, it seems unclear whether the incident reported by Waters occurred on the same night as the one reported by Bobo—especially in view of the independent report, indirectly provided by Carl Thompson, of at least two separate sightings at the WSA, on two different nights that week. Bobo recalls hearing some of Col. Halts radio communications from the woods, relayed to him by Egercic, the night he was in the tower. If so, that convincingly places him at the WSA on the last night of UFO activity during that week.

For his part, Waters recalls talking to an officer on the morning following his own sighting, who told him that burn damage had been found on some of the trees in the woods, apparently the result of the UFO "bouncing" between them as it landed. But exactly when did that damage occur? As of now, there arc two possible dates: Either during the early morning hours of December 26th, when Jim Penniston and Jim Burroughs reported finding a landed, triangular-shaped UFO in the forest or, on the other hand, some 48-hours later, when Lt. CoI. Halt's team saw a UFO that looked like "a big eye" moving through the woods. Neither Bobo nor Waters reports seeing a triangular-shaped UFO, suggesting that the object each one saw was not the landed craft reported by Penniston and Burroughs. (One person I interviewed speculated that the hovering, round UFO may have dropped a triangular-shape probe into the woods, but we have no eyewitness reports for such an event.)

However, if both Bobo's and Waters' sightings occurred on the same night —when Halt was in the forest—why does Bobo remember speaking to Tim Egercic at CSC, while Waters recalls speaking "most of the time" to someone there named Coakley, during his own sighting? Furthermore, if Rick Bobo had a 360-degree view of the area from the tower, why did he not see the UFO when it was much closer to the WSA, at which time, according to

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Waters, its apparent size was that of a cantaloupe held at arms length? Waters said the UFO was moving slowly over the forest, and visible to him for several seconds, from his much lower position on the berm. One would think that an object in the sky that large, moving rather slowly, would have been hard to miss, especially by someone in the tower!

Considering all of these facts, is it possible that Waters' sighting occurred on a different night than Bobo's? If so, had the UFO that Waters saw just buzzed the WSA's tower, seconds before it caught his eye—as reported by a member of the 2164th Communications Squadron, w|l0 was doing repair work in the tower? At this point, I simply don't know the answers to these questions and am obviously speculating.

Having spoken at length with Carl Thompson—the source of the "tower buzzing" story—I consider him to be a credible source. Col Halt reviewed Thompson's verbatim comments to me, and agrees with my assessment. So how do we reconcile the dramatic telephone calls Thompson reportedly received from his frightened co-worker, while he was in the tower at the WSA, with the statements of Bobo and Waters' Both say that the UFO they saw was never over the WSA, certainly not buzzing the tower. Before this particular mystery can be solved it will be necessary to find out who was manning the tower each night that week, to get their input on the matter.

Finally, I asked Waters whether he had been debriefed after the incident, or threatened by anyone, perhaps OSI, to keep quiet about the sighting. He said simply, "No, nothing like that." It will be remembered that Rick Bobo had told me the same thing. So, assuming that there had in fact been a debriefing of Security Policemen, as reported to Carl Thompson by his very angry coworker in the 2164th Communications Squadron—during which he and a number of SPs were allegedly harassed and threatened—then who were those other individuals? According to Egercic, Bobo and Waters, they were not debriefed at all. Were there other SPs on duty at the WSA, or working elsewhere on either base that week, who were later singled out for an interrogation and, if so, why was nor everyone present for the various reported sightings debriefed?

And then there is Halt's crucial report of the beams of light seen falling from a UFO into or near the WSA. If that actually occurred, as radio chatter

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seemed to indicate, why did no one in the WSA, at least the former Security Policemen whom I've interviewed thus far, actually see any of those beams, or remember any chatter about them on the radio? As Tim Egercic correctly noted, beams of light falling on one or more of the weapons bunkers would have been considered a breach of security and, presumably, all hell would have broken loose at the WSA. And yet, according to the three former Security Policemen I've interviewed, nothing like that ever happened.

That said, however, an obviously credible source, then Lt. Col. Halt, reports seeing those beams with his own eyes, as well as hearing on the radio that they had fallen "into or near" the Weapons Storage Area. Halt even told me that "several airmen" on duty at the WSA that night had later mentioned seeing the beams. So who were those individuals, and why didn't Rick Bobo or Tim Egercic see the beams themselves, or at least hear about them over the radio, from others who were on duty that night?

In the same vein, another highly credible source, my retired USAF officer and ex-NATO weapons security specialist, spoke of reading a report which confirmed that a beam or beams of light had indeed fallen into the weapons bunker complex, apparently generating enough concern for, well, someone with command authority, to order that two of the tactical nukes be removed from one of the bunkers and flown to Kirtland AFB for inspection. (As I will mention shortly, another former SP I've interviewed may have actually witnessed that particular weapons transfer.)

In any case, I find all of these apparent discrepancies quire perplexing. Egercic notes that 12 Security Police guarded the WSA on each shift. I am attempting to identify the others who would have been present on the night Halt was in the forest, to attempt to learn if any of them saw anything resembling beams of light falling onto the nuclear weapons bunkers. Needless to say, I would also like to hear from any of the other witnesses to the UFO-related events at the WSA, regardless of the date they occurred. Once vetted, all information will be kept confidential, unless I am given permission to publish it.

My own research aside, some of those involved—or, in certain cases, not involved—with the UFO incidents at Bentwaters and Woodbridge are themselves concerned that the facts be published and the false reports be

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squelched. For example, when I thanked Tim Egercic for all of his assistance in tracking down others who had been at the Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area during the period of UFO activity at the twin bases, he responded, "[Former SP] Michael Christian has encouraged me throughout the years to cooperate with researchers to help ensure the truth gets out there. As I mentioned in a previous email, Michael was identified on one website as one of the airmen in the WSA tower observing the UFOs. Since he departed RAF Bentwaters before the Rendlesham UFO incidents, it goes to show how false rumors can distort the facts."

Regarding the events in Rendlesham Forest itself, another former Air Force source, David Winget, told me, "I arrived at Bentwaters/Woodbridge on the 13th of January 1981 [the same day Halt wrote his memo about the UFO incidents in the forest]. At that time, I was an Airman attached to the 81st AGS, Aircraft Weapons Squadron. My job was Aircraft Weapons Specialist (bomb loader). Basically, I was responsible for the maintenance and loading/unloading of the weapons systems on the A-1 Os. During my commanders briefing we were all told not venture into those woods or to ask any questions regarding [what had happened there] otherwise court martial. The reason was for 'national security'..."

The highly sensitive nature of whatever happened in the woods has also been confirmed by another source. Shortly before this book was published, I located and interviewed former Air Force Security Policeman James "J.D." Burris, who had been briefed on the events of the second encounter. Burris told me,

At the time, December 1980, I was a Senior Airman assigned to the 81st Security Police Squadron. That particular day, I was working the day-shift at Central Security Control (CSC). My flight chief that day was Master Sgt. Raymond Gulyas; the shift commander was Captain Michael Verano. The day began normally, but then we got briefed on what went on the night before. We were told what happened, what they saw, and so on. It definitely became clear that it was not going to be a normal day.

At first, I thought that [the briefers] were having fun, you know, their own

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version of a joke. But it got real clear, real fast, that it was no joke! The first thing I was told was that the incident had been left out of the desk blotter and that Lt. Col. Halt wanted it included, so that had to be done on my shift. So I was involved in preparing that, which is the only reason I know anything about the incident. That's when I found out about the impressions in the ground and, uh, tree branches were supposed to have been broken, I guess when the object landed. I never would have known about any of that if I hadn't been posted at CSC that day.

All I recall during the briefing was being told that something unexplained happened. Something descended and landed in the forest. Sgt. Gulyas told me about the photos he tried to take. He told me about the [landing gear] pod castings that they took. He told me about the radiation readings, not specifically what they were, but that they were not normal [background] readings. About a week later, he told me that the pictures didn't come out. Gulyas never speculated to me about the object. He just said that it was an unexplained thing on the ground. He really didn't want to say a lot.

In fact, it was years later before I knew that there had been another incident [involving Penniston and Burroughs on December 26th], I saw that on TV, on Unsolved Mysteries. That's also when I learned about the lights coming down into the Weapons Storage Area. As far as I knew, all of the activity took place in the woods, off the end of the Woodbridge runway. There was never any mention of [the UFO] passing over Bentwaters, or over the WSA. If that had come out at the time, Oh, Jesus!

Now, the document that was typed up at CSC that day was classified, but at a very low level: For Official Use Only. The base telephone book had the same classification. There were, uh, six copies of that: the wing commander got one, the deputy wing commander, the base commander, the deputy base commander, the chief of Security Police, and one stayed at CSC.

Later that day, we got word that the 'head shed' had said [that we were] not

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to discuss the incident. The head shed was what we called the wing commander's office. So, we understood [there were to be] no questions asked, and that we were supposed to keep our mouths shut. In fact, even before we were told that, unlike any other situation, there was no chatter, no scuttlebutt. That in itself was unusual.

Master Sgt. [Robert] Ball was still at CSC when I went on shift. He was supervisor of Delta Flight. I think they were at the Weapons Storage Area that night, when it happened. The on-duty flight was responsible for the security of both bases, and that included the Weapons Storage Area. Anyway, I saw him at Battle Staff later that day and he wasn't saying anything. Usually, he had some comment for someone, [because] nothing ever got by him, bur that day he, well, he seemed to have something on his mind.

At this point in the interview, Burris asked me what I knew about the weapons kept at the Weapons Storage Area. In response, I summarized what I had been told by various sources over the years: the bunkers held tactical nuclear bombs; two had allegedly been removed after the UFO incident and shipped back to the U.S. for inspection. At that point, Burris interrupted me and finished my sentence: "...on a C-5A Galaxy [cargo aircraft].'' He then confirmed that he knew about weapons being flown to the states shortly after the UFO-related events at the twin bases.

Burris said, "About a week, maybe two, after the [second] incident in the woods, a C-5A flew in. It… got special security—top echelon security. Various procedures were implemented that were only put in place for that one aircraft." I asked Burris, "So, the only time those procedures were put in place was during the transfer of nuclear weapons?" He heaved a sigh and said, "I don't really want to answer that but, uh, yes, the answer is yes."

Burris continued, "We knew [the aircraft] was coming and before it arrived we established a security perimeter around the area [where it would park], posted two guards, and they were there until the aircraft left the next day. The morning after it arrived, there was a weapons movement from the Weapons Storage Area to the aircraft, after which it took off. When we were briefed

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about it, we were told it was a ‘routine’ transfer back to the states. Well, maybe so, but it was the only weapons transfer I saw during my three years at the base.” (When I sent Burris’ comments to Col. Halt, he responded, “I was not surprised to hear weapons were sent back to Kirtland AFB for resting. At the time I couldn’t understand why it wasn’t done. It must have been done so low-key that few noticed. We regularly had C-5s and C-14 Is moving them so it would probably thought of as routine.”)

Given Burris’ statements about the approximate date of the weapons transfer, relative to the period of UFO activity at the WSA, it appears as if the information I was given years earlier, relating to such a transfer, was indeed correct. It will be recalled that my retired NATO weapons security specialist told me about that event in 1994. While it’s conceivable that the weapons transfer observed by Burris was indeed routine and had nothing to do with the reported UFO incident at the Weapons Storage Area, in my view, its timing suggests a possible link.

I then asked Burris if he had ever attempted to learn more about the incident later on, by asking others on base about it. He said, “No, I was trying to forget what I already knew, to tell you the truth. For me it was, ‘Okay, if you say so.’ At that time, I didn’t believe in UFOs or anything like that.”

As the interview was winding down, Burris unexpectedly said,

Later on, around November 1982, at Woodbridge, I had [a UFO sighting] experience myself. I had been switched over to the night crews [earlier that year] because I had been promoted to Staff Sergeant. It was one of those rare occasions when I had ‘base patrol’ instead of being 50feet off the ground [in the tower] at the Weapons Storage Area. Bobby [Burgeron] and I were headed down to the East Gate—the back gate of Woodbridge—and we saw three sets of what appeared to be ball park lights, hanging over Rendlesham Forest. The three groups were in a straight line, all at the same altitude, just above the trees. We weren’t scared when we saw that, just curious.

So we decided to pick up SSgt ------- and then hit the Prairie Track road, on the base perimeter, to make sure that nothing was next to the fence. Just as we turned off the hard pavement, the truck shut down. It wouldn't restart—it

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wouldn't even 'click.' So SSgt ------- and I walked back to the supervisor's shack to call and have a new truck sent out to us. As he and I started walking we could see that the lights were still there. We were closer to them by then and could see that each group of lights appeared to curve around the middle of what seemed like a, uh, football-shaped object—not laying on its side, but set on-end. There were three of those side by side.

Before we got to the shack, Bobby had gotten the truck started and came up to us. I asked him, 'How did you get the truck started?' He said he had just turned the key. At that point, we both looked over at the woods and saw that the lights over the trees were gone. We didn't report it.

When I sent Burris' sighting report to Col. Halt, more unexpected information emerged. He responded, "I know of another sighting at Woodbridge on Guy Fawkes Night (November 5th) in 1981. Two independent [security] police patrols saw a large cigar-shaped object float in from the sea and silently loop around the Woodbridge tower. Neither reported it and I only found out by chance as they were leaving for a new assignment."

I must admit I was surprised by Halt's disclosure, as well as by Burris' sighting report. Over the last 25 years, I had only heard about the UFO activity at Bentwaters and Woodbridge occurring in December 1980. Now I was suddenly presented with two new, unrelated reports in rapid succession. This unexpected turn of events made me wonder whether even more sightings had occurred at the twin bases around that time. Searching the Internet, I quickly discovered three additional accounts by former members of the 81st Security Police Squadron—all unrelated to the now-famous UFO incursions in December 1980. Lori Rehfeldt, who was an Airman First Class at the time, wrote,

In February 1980, while on D Flight, I was on patrol with A1C Keith Duffield. At that time, [Woodbridge's] East Gate was closed but we had to make checks to ensure [it] was locked. My patrol pick-up was [behind the East Gate shack] positioned looking off base… I just finished reviewing the

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check sheet and we weren't in any rush. Then we saw a bright white light coming in from the North Sea (from east to west) in the direction of the runway.

At first we thought it was a regular aircraft. I kept looking at the runway to see if the [landing] lights would go on... they didn't. Then the light stopped about two football field lengths away from us and just stayed suspended in the sky. Then it made some geometric movements, going sharply straight up, straight down, then left (north), then right (south) and then broke into three pieces [which] sped off across the runway then straight up into the night sky at an incredibly fast speed. The entire time the object did not make any noise or mechanical sound. We didn't see a shape to the UFO.

Well, I did report it to the Desk Sergeant...The guys on the radio gave me a lot of grief and teasing over it, so much so that I felt pressured to drop the issue. I told Duffield that I wasn't going to pursue it unless told by my supervisor to do so, and I strongly sensed that my supervisor was relieved that I didn't pursue it.[6]

Another former security policeman, Ken Kern, reported two separate sighting incidents. He prefaced the first by saying, As I write this, I am looking at two 3x5 index cards, part of a larger group of index cards which comprised my diary while at RAFs Bentwaters and Woodbridge. [Here is] what I wrote back in June 1980...a half a year before the now famous UFO incidents…

15 June 80—Interesting nite—it's our second mid[night shift] and Wagner and Campbell have A-2. They sighted a UFO [on] five different occasions...Described as a red globe 20ft. in diameter. It hovered at times over aircraft pads/structures. Labrucherie also sighted this UFO; he had A-l. At one time they said the UFO glided over the trees to a meadow where it suddenly disappeared [in] a white flash (pooof!) and then nothing… I believe this story to be authentic.[7]

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Kern added, “A-2 was the area security patrol and A-l was the entry control post to the to the Alpha aircraft parking area at RAF Bentwaters.”

Kern’s second account was more dramatic, and involved him directly. He prefaced his post by writing that the index card on which it had originally been summarized was currently unavailable, adding, “I still have it somewhere and as soon as I find it I’ll update this webpage with the exact date.” In other words, unlike his first report, written down shortly after the events described in it, the one below is a reconstruction undertaken many years later. In any case, Kern wrote,

This happened during a midnight shift some months before the now famous Rendlesham UFO incidents near RAF Woodbridge. I was assigned to Whiskey [4 or 5] the mobile ART or Area Response Team in the Bentwaters WSA or Weapons Storage Area. The WSA was where they stored the nuclear weapons.

I was with Rick Jenkins in a truck during a usual silent and eventless night. The nights sky was black and starry. All of a sudden from up high appeared a big green object that came down and crashed into the forest just outside the WSA double fence line perimeter. This all happened in the matter of a second. The object made no noise—absolutely no noise even when it ‘crashed’ in the woods. Nothing.

Anyway, I remained silent for seconds, which seemed like an eternity, looking straight out the trucks windshield. I finally asked Rick if he saw what I just saw and he replied “Was it big and green and just came flying out of the sky?” That was the first and last time Rick and I ever spoke of this. It did not seem that anyone else saw this object that night. We did not hear of it from anyone else.[8]

Ken Kern is now retired from law enforcement, having been a Special Agent with the Immigration and Naturalization Service and later a Senior

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Special Agent with the Department of Homeland Security'. When I called him, he told me, “The whole incident at the WSA took a split second, maybe not even that long. We were sitting in the ART truck, looking through the windshield. Something caught my eye, high up in the sky. like a flash. Then I saw this big green object, maybe the size of the full moon or larger, come right down at us. But it appeared to land outside the WSA—not very far, maybe a hundred yards outside the fence line. There was no sound, no explosion when it hit, nothing.”

I asked Kern if he recalled the timing of this incident, relative to the UFO activity of December 1980. He replied, “I wish I still had that particular index card, which had the exact date, but I would say it occurred several months before December, but exactly how long before I could”1 say. One thing that I do recall, which I found a little strange was that shortly after the green object crashed into the woods, during the same shift, our squadron commander, Major Ziegler, and our operations officer, Major Drury, both came into the WSA. I had never seen the two of them together, making their rounds at night, either before then or after that. They probably had, but I never saw them together like that. They came up to our truck and talked to us, but they didn’t ask us anything about the green object, and we didn’t volunteer anything. I guess we rationalized that since it really did not land in the WSA itself, it was okay not to mention it. But I do find it strange that Rick Jenkins and I never discussed the incident among ourselves after that. I’m not sure why.”

Kern continued, “Back then, lots of people were ‘snapped’—that’s what we called it—people lost their PRP if they showed any indication of strange behavior, or whatever. Most of those cases had to do with other kinds of personal issues, but if you were snapped, you ended up on sandbag duty, a nobody. People didn’t want to end up like that, so they kept their mouths shut a lot.”

Here is yet another example of sighting witnesses who worked at nuclear weapons sites maintaining silence about their UFO experiences for fear of losing their Personnel Reliability Program clearance. As noted elsewhere, several of my former Air Force missile guard sources have told me of their reluctance to discuss their sighting with their superiors at the time. Over the decades, this self-imposed censorship has undoubtedly resulted in a

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significant number of UFO incursions at ICBM sites and Weapons Storage Areas going unreported.

Of course, in many cases, Security Policemen did indeed report their UFO sightings. Regarding his other posted report, involving SPs guarding aircraft at Bentwaters, Kern told me, “At the end of the shift that night, while we were turning in our weapons at the armory, I heard Wagner talking to our flight chief. He was very, very upset, almost shaking, like he was about to fall apart. Later, I asked Wagner, or maybe it was Campbell, what had happened and that’s when I heard their story. Something very unusual had obviously happened to them.”

Given these reports by former security personnel assigned to the 81 st Security Police Squadron, it would seem that UFOs made at least five other appearances at the twin bases in 1980-82, which have until now escaped widespread public attention. In particular, the three posted reports mentioned above—two of them relating to sightings occurring in February and June of 1980; the third occurring during the same general period—suggest a prelude of UFO activity at Bentwaters and Woodbridge several months prior to the big show in December.

The green object sighted at the Weapons Storage Area is particularly interesting to me. It was certainly not a naturally-occurring meteorite, or its impact would have resulted in a deafening noise and huge concussion If the object sighted by Kern and Jenkins was in fact a bona fide green fireball—of the type sighted over the Los Alamos and Sandia nuclear labs as well as following various atmospheric atomic tests in Nevada in the late 1940s and 1950s—then its appearance at the Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area is especially noteworthy.

The UFO Radar Tracking at Bentwaters

Aside from persons reporting UFO incursions at the Weapons Storage Area, I have also interviewed the two USAF air traffic controllers who were on duty during the period of the UFO activity. James H. Carey and Ivan “Ike” R. Barker, now belatedly admit to tracking an unidentified target on radar at the Bentwaters Air Traffic Control Tower one night—sometime between December 26, 1980, and January 1, 1981—as they worked an extended

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holiday schedule.

This is the first time the now-retired controllers' testimony has been published. Jim Carey told me: "At the time, I was a tech sergeant, an air traffic controller with the 2164th Communications Squadron. The other controller was named Ike Barker. A major named --- ------ was also there. I think the incident happened between 10 and 12 o'clock, if I remember right. Ike and I usually worked 6 p.m. to midnight, but it was during the holidays, when we might have to work eight or nine hours. But as I recall, it happened before midnight."

Carey continued, "What I remember is seeing was a very fast object on the radar we had in the tower. The scope was variable—it had a zoom as far as its [displayed] range, between five and 60-miles radius, but I think it was at set at a 60-miles when the object appeared. It came in from the east, went straight west across the scope and disappeared off the left side. It took maybe four sweeps—each sweep was two or three seconds—to cross it entirely. So it covered 120-miles in [approximately eight to twelve] seconds. In the 15 years I was an air traffic controller, I'd never seen anything travel across the scope that fast. A few seconds later, it came back on the scope, retracing its course, west to east, at the same speed. Then—I think it was maybe half or three-quarters of the way across—it did an immediate right-angle turn and headed south, off the bottom of the screen. I mean, it turned just like that, instantly. We couldn't believe it! I told Ike, 'Okay, that was not one of ours!'"

Carey concluded, "So, that's all I remember, except for the chatter on the radio. I think it was on the majors hand-held radio, which was turned to the Command Post Net. That's who he always talked to [on other occasions]. I wasn't really listening to it, so I don't remember any of the details, but I do know that [the radio] was pretty quiet all night then, all of a sudden, they're just yakking back and forth. They were kind of excited but that's all I recall. Besides, if they were going to discuss UFOs or security problems, or that kind of stuff, they would have gone to a restricted channel, which they scrambled. But the chatter did start up a little while after we tracked the object. Anyway, I only saw the unidentified object on radar, but Ike told us that he saw something out the window."

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I asked Carey to explain why Barker was able to observe an aerial object out the window, but he was not. He replied, "It all happened so fast," he said, "Ike said the object was hovering there for just a moment, then it left really fast. So I guess I was looking the down at the scope at that time. I believe Ike when he says he saw [the UFO] but I just can not remember [seeing] it."

I asked Carey if he and Barker had logged or otherwise reported the radar tracking and sighting. He replied, "No, we could not say a lot about this because we were air traffic controllers—a very serious job. Our bosses could have removed us at any time if they thought we were acting kind of funny or weird, so to keep our jobs, we never made a big deal of this. We both loved our jobs and something like this could be cause for removal from the career field for good. But [considering the other reports of UFO activity at Bentwaters] we thought it was funny no one ever talked with us about what we saw that night."

When I interviewed Ike Barker, he said,

Everything I tell you, well, I would be happy to take a lie detector test. I was a master sergeant, with the 2164th Communications Squadron. There were three of us there that night. I was the tower supervisor, Jim Carey was working for me, and the Supervisor of Flying was Major --- ------. He wasn't a controller, he was there for emergencies in the air and that kind of thing. He assisted the aircraft, if they needed it, but had nothing to do with air traffic control.

Anyway, that night, it was slow at the time, no aircraft in the area. We had a radar scope in the tower we called the "Bright 2" that had a 60-miles radius around the Bentwaters complex itself. I looked down at the scope and saw a bright streak move across it. An aircraft always appears as a series of blips, one blip for each [radar] sweep, moving slowly across the screen. But this thing almost looked like a straight line, with the blip leaving a ghostly trail behind it. That's how fast it was moving. It came in from the northeast, directly over the base, directly over us, stopped for a few seconds, immediately reversed course and went back out the way it came in.

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After I told Barker that Carey recalled the UFO coming in from the east—rather than the northeast—he consulted a map of the twin bases, and said, "Jim was almost right about the inbound and departure: the thing came in from the southeast, crossed over Bentwaters to the downward leg—which would have been a mile to a mile-and-a-half from the [radar] antenna—and then went back out to the south, or a little bit southeast, probably over Rendlesham Forest, which was south of Bentwaters. Ii went completely off the scope, so it was 60 miles away when we lost it." However, Barker does not recall the unidentified target performing a right-angle turn on its way out, as Carey contends.

Barker continued,

And there was a visual on it. When it hovered, I saw it out the window. It was basket ball-shaped, and had sort of an orangish glow. Not bright orange, uh, sort of dim, maybe like the full moon would look behind a thin layer of clouds. There seemed to be something across the center of it, lighter-colored shapes like—don't laugh—like portholes or windows, or even lights, in a row left to right, across its center. Maybe six or eight of them. They were stationary, not moving across the object. But it seemed spherical, not flat like a flying saucer. I couldn't hear any noise. It wasn't huge, but I think it was bigger than an airplane. I would say it was maybe twice the size of an F-l 11. Now, there's a water tower at Bentwaters. If you were in the air traffic tower, facing the runway, the tower is almost behind you. [From my vantage point] the object was directly over top of the water tower, or just past it. The object [appeared] larger, maybe twice as large, as the tank on the water tower. It stopped in mid-air for a few seconds, probably 500-feet, uh, maybe a 1000-feet above the tower, then it left. I didn't see it turn, uh, rotate or anything like that before leaving.

But what impressed me most was the speed this thing had. I have never seen anything so fast in my life! It was zoom, gone! I would say the object was slightly higher than traffic pattern altitude. As soon as it left, I had Jim get on the phone to the controllers at the Woodbridge tower. He was patched through by the GCA (Ground Control Approach) radar unit. A British

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civilian at the tower said, 'No, we didn't [track] it. We weren't manning the scopes. We're in the break room.' That tower was manned by Air Force controllers too but, like us, had a British civilian working there. He's the guy Jim spoke with.

In any case, when I told Barker that Carey had said he did not remember seeing the UFO out the window. Barker replied emphatically,

Oh, he saw it! They both saw it! But we weren't going to admit that. Just after I saw the object out the window, I turned to Jim and --- and said, 'I didn't see that, did you?' One of them responded, 'No, I didn't see it either.' I don't remember who answered me, but they both saw it. But we made no log entries on anything, including the fast-moving target. We didn't really have a discussion about not telling anyone, because that was already understood. You may know that there was a deal with the Air Force—I don't how familiar you are with their procedures and policies years ago—but if you reported a UFO sighting, you might be woken up at 3 a.m. for an interrogation. I once went through that when I was in Japan, earlier, before I was at Bentwaters. 1 was in the radar unit there too and we tracked a UFO on Yokota's long-range radar, short-range radar, and final approach PAR radar—and the Japanese unit there got it with a height-finder [radar].

Plus, there was a visual sighting by three controllers in the tower. [In spite of all those factors] the Air Force said it was the reflection of a car on the highway. The controllers were harassed to the point that they said the object they saw were only aircraft lights. That taught me a lesson:

Never go on the record. Never open your mouth. So, at Bentwaters, I think we were all scared to discuss it. I know I was. As I said before, we didn't even record it in the log.

After the object left, uh, maybe an hour later, we could see lights, actually a glow, in the direction of Woodbridge, but the trees blocked our view so we

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couldn't see what was causing it. Now that I think about it, I'm not sure if --- was still up [in the tower] at that time, but I know Jim was. The glow seemed like it was coming out of the forest; it wasn't like lights in the air. It could have even been vehicles on the ground, but I know one damn thing—it wasn't a lighthouse!

Barker laughed heartily at his own jibe. All of my Bentwaters sources think UFO debunker James McGaha's notorious lighthouse explanation for the UFO sightings is ridiculous, and have gone out of their way to tell me so. Now that I have secured the candid testimony of the two air traffic controllers who were working in the Bentwaters tower every night that week, I'm certain McGaha will come up with a false-radar-return theory to explain away the tracking, as well as some other mumbo jumbo to explain away the spherical, orange-colored object Barker saw out the tower's window.

I then asked Barker about the excited radio chatter that Care mentioned overhearing that night. He replied,

Yes, the major had a 'brick'—that's what we used to call a hand-held FM radio. There was so much chatter that, at one point, he turned down the volume. Something was going on, that was obvious, but I don't recall hearing what they were saying. A few weeks later, I did hear some scuttlebutt about the UFO sightings during the holidays from an OSI agent named ---- ------, who Jim and I played golf with. I think that was the first time I heard anyone mention that others on base had seen them too. But I didn't let on that we had actually tracked one of them and had seen it over the water tower. ------ was a nice guy, but an OSI agent was the last person I would have told that to.

Barker then speculated that the agent might have been probing him, intentionally mentioning the UFO activity, just to see what kind of response his comments would elicit.

Barker later told me that he or Carey had also called a British radar unit known as Eastern Radar, to report the tracking. British researcher Dr. David Clarke has interviewed the RAF Commander who was at Eastern Radar in 1980-81, Derek Coumbe, who confirms receiving a call from the Bentwaters tower. According to Clarke, "[Coumbe] was on duty when the UFO report

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was received in the early hours of 28 December. He said he received a direct call patched through from the Bentwaters tower reporting a 'flashing light' over Rendlesham Forest." Coumbe logged the call, noting that although he had the duty controller attempt to verify the track, "nothing was observed."[9]

This account raises a number of questions about the radar tracking mentioned by Barker and Carey. Both recall it having occurred sometime before midnight, probably on the night of December 27th, however, the British log entry about the call was made on the 28th at 0325 GMT (3:25 a.m.). Further, Coumbe remembers the caller making reference to a flashing light over the woods, however, Barker only recalls seeing a round, non-flashing object near the base water tower, while Carey does not recall a visual on the object at all.

Are Barker and Carey wrong about the timing of the tracking? Barker recalls having Carey call the Woodbridge tower immediately afterward, via a patch from the Ground Control Approach radar unit, to find out whether the controllers there also tracked the UFO. According to Barker, the Woodbridge tower usually closed down each night around midnight, therefore, it would seem that the radar tracking reported to me had to have occurred hours earlier than 3:25 a.m. If that was the case, it appears there was a second tracking at Bentwaters. If so, why do Barker and Carey not remember it, or recall reporting a flashing light over the forest? Both recall seeing a glow coming from the woods, but nothing in the air above them. I asked Barker these questions but he was as puzzled as I.

Another obvious question is why only one or two UFOs left radar signatures when Halt reported seeing at least four of them low in the sky—about "10-degrees" above the horizon—while he was in the farmer's field. I asked Barker to explain this discrepancy but he told me he didn't know why there weren't more anomalous tracks that night, adding, "We would have tracked anything down to 500-feet [in altitude]."

So, as is the case with the other sighting witnesses at the Weapons Storage Area, there are lots of unanswered questions about the events occurring in the Bentwaters Air Traffic Control Tower during the holiday week of December 1980. I finally asked Barker for his opinion about the object he tracked. He replied, "I can tell you that this was no man-made technology. I was very

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familiar with all types of aircraft, obviously, and I can tell you that what I saw was not from any country on Earth. I will never forget it!"

In summary, the December 1980 incidents at RAF Bentwaters, RAF Woodbridge and Rendlesham Forest are self-evidently important. While it may be many more years before all of the facts are known, they already rank among the most significant of the UFO cases. Meanwhile, back in the United States, other U.S. Air Force base commanders had their own nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents to contend with, as I will now discuss.

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22. “Satellite” Alerts

Bentwaters was apparently not the only Air Force base to experience unidentified aerial activity near its Weapons Storage Area during the 1980 time-frame. After posting a message at the F.E. Warren AFB Museum website, asking for information from UFO sighting witnesses who had been stationed at the base, I received this statement from Jay DeSisto, who wrote,

I was an Airman 1st Class while stationed at F.E. Warren, in 1980-81. I worked as an LE (Law Enforcement) with the 90th Security Police Group. I was assigned to base patrol and very soon promoted to the position of Desk Sergeant, even though I was only an airman. Thinking back, I can recall numerous occasions when I was on duty as Desk Sergeant when the security personnel at the Weapons Storage Area would contact me and report ‘lights’ overhead. I would usually dispatch a base patrolman to the area to confirm the sightings but I cannot recall any specific outcomes. I am sure I would have reported these incidents in the desk blotter.

While I never experienced or heard of any ‘UFOs’ while stationed there, there were several times when we were called in for duty on our days off to patrol the base perimeter because there were satellites allegedly overhead taking pictures. I always wondered what those recalls were about. It was strange. Again, no one ever mentioned UFOs, it was always ‘satellites’. None of those recalls happened while I was on duty as the Desk Sergeant.

The ‘satellite’ incidents were clustered, not spread-out, during my tenure at Warren. I seem to recall they would occur two or three nights in a row. I recall three times when my flight had to report for extra duty. One time we had been out at a bar off-base and when we returned to the base, the gate guards told us to immediately report to the armory to obtain weapons. Even though we had been drinking, they issued us weapons and we were posted on the perimeter of the nuclear Weapons Storage Area on base. It was unusual to use Law Enforcement personnel for this duty in that it was normally a

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function of the Security Police personnel.

On two other occasions we were contacted at our barracks and told to report to the armory and obtain weapons. One of those times, I was posted at the Weapons Storage Area and another I was posted at the Combat Command Center doorway. Each time I was recalled for duty, our Flight Chief, a Tech Sergeant named Robert Moore, explained the situation regarding the satellites. During these instances our group headquarters was very active. Our squadron commander, Major Bernal F. Koersen, was usually present.

It really did not make sense to us that we were being called in for duty because of a satellite overhead. It seemed odd to have us don combat gear and weaponry. We just accepted the explanation of 'satellites' but, because of the way we were rousted for duty and the command activity present, we knew these incidents were very different from any type of readiness response exercise we had participated in, which were frequent and routine. We were often called in for extra duty during DoD inspections or Global Shield exercises, but again, during the satellite incidents, there was a different feel to the situation and the hurried and tense demeanor of command-level staff was quite different.

Satellite Alerts. Well, that's a new one, at least for me. Some pretty creative thinking by the brass, I have to admit. One of my other ex-USAF sources suggests the possibility that the mysterious satellites reported above F.E. Warren were actually Soviet satellites involved in the verification of the 1972 U.S.-Soviet SALT I agreement, which required a set-limit for strategic missile launchers in both countries. I seriously doubt it. Like DeSisto, I can think of no plausible reason why the guards would have been issued weapons and ammo in a situation involving orbiting Soviet satellites, passing overhead at an altitude of a hundred or so miles. Furthermore, the satellite alert story definitely would not explain the unidentified lights repeatedly reported hovering above F.E. Warrens nuclear Weapons Storage Area.

For these reasons, I am inclined to think that a UFO presence was involved in these incidents. I am asking individuals who were assigned to the 90th

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Security Police Group—or any earlier security police unit at F.E. Warren—to contact me with information relating to the "satellite alert" incidents, or sightings of unusual lights above the WSA, which may have occurred from the early 1960s onward. (No contacts from active-duty personnel, please.) As noted earlier, my contact information appears in Appendix A.

A Landed Disc at the Manzano WSA

Another U.S. Air Force base to experience UFO activity at its nuclear weapons storage area in 1980 was Kirtland AFB, outside Albuquerque, New Mexico. Kirtland is adjacent to the Sandia National Laboratories, where nukes are engineered, as well as the Manzano Weapons Storage Area (now closed) where they were stockpiled for decades.

According to the AFOSI complaint form, "[On 8 Aug 80] at approximately 2350 hrs. (11:50 p.m.), while on duty in the Charlie Sector, east side of Manzano, [three Air Force Security Policemen] observed a very bright light in the sky approximately 3 miles north-northeast of their position. The light traveled with great speed and stopped suddenly in the sky over Coyote Canyon. The three first thought the light was a helicopter, however, after observing the strange aerial maneuvers (stop and go), they felt a helicopter couldn't have performed such skills. The light landed in the Coyote Canyon area. Sometime later, [the] three witnessed the light take off and leave proceeding straight up at a high speed and disappear..." The OSI report goes on to say that some thirty minutes later, a Sandia security guard driving on an access road to Coyote Canyon, on a routine building check of an alarmed structure. "As he approached the structure," it continues, "he observed a bright light near the ground behind the structure. He also observed an object he first thought was a helicopter. But after driving closer, he observed a round disk shaped object. He attempted to radio for a backup patrol but his radio would not work. As he approached the object on foot armed with a shotgun, the object took off in a vertical direction at a high rate of speed. The guard was a former helicopter mechanic in the U.S. Army and stated the object he observed was not a helicopter."

The definitive investigation of this incident was conducted by Dr. Bruce Maccabee in the mid-1980s, and his findings are now online.1 Therefore, I

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will not elaborate on the case.

In summary, the pattern of UFO sightings at various U.S. Air Force Weapons Storage Areas, during the 1980-81 time-frame, is yet another example of the interest that nukes hold for those who pilot the mysterious aerial craft. Moreover, as the reader is about to learn—or perhaps already suspected—UFO activity has not been confined only to American nuclear weapons sites.

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23. Back in the U.S.S.R.

In October 1994, ABC News aired an episode of its news magazine, *Prime Time Live*, featuring interviews with former Soviet military personnel who had been involved in one UFO-related incident or another during the Cold War era. (A transcript of the ABC program is currently available online.1) After the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in 1991, a number of these individuals began speaking openly with Western journalists and researchers about previously-classified UFO sightings.

ABC reporter David Ensor set up the segment: "During a five-month investigation *Prime Time* obtained over a thousand pages of documents collected by the old KGB. We spoke to dozens of Russian scientists, government officials, and military men. We now know that the entire Soviet armed forces, a total of 15 million people over ten years, was involved in a UFO study that turned up forty major incidents, including one that prompted fears of starting an accidental nuclear war."2 That last incident was remarkably similar to, and just as frightening, as the one former U.S. Air Force Minuteman missile launch officer David Schuur revealed to me in August 2007. (See the chapter, "Launch in Progress!")

Among those interviewed by ABC News was retired Army Lt. Col. Vladimir Plantonev (spelled "Plutinov" in other published references), who described an hours-long UFO sighting on October 4, 1982, near an ICBM base outside the village of Byelokoroviche, in Soviet Ukraine. He told Ensor, "It looked just like a flying saucer. The way they show them in the movies. No portholes, nothing. The surface was absolutely even. The disk made a beautiful turn, like this, on the edge, just like a plane. There was no sound. I had never seen anything like that before."[3]

Apparently, while the UFO was still in the vicinity, an unspecified number of nuclear missiles suddenly activated. As the horrified launch crew looked on helplessly, the automated launch sequence was enabled—without proper authorization—and proceeded to count-down for 15 terrifying seconds, before aborting and returning to stand-by status.

Another retired army officer, Colonel Igor Chernovshev, told Ensor-

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"During this period, for a short time, signal lights on both the control panels suddenly turned on. The lights showing that missiles were preparing for launch. This could normally only happen if an order were transmitted from Moscow."[4]

Of course, the citizens of the Soviet Union were never informed of this frightening event. As is the case with their American counterparts who have never been officially told by the Pentagon or the White House of ongoing UFO sightings at U.S. nuclear missile sites, they were kept completely in the dark. Nevertheless, the dramatic incident in Soviet Ukraine, in October 1982, obviously involved potentially disastrous consequences. If the missile launch had actually taken place, and a few American or Western European cities or military targets had been vaporized as a result, it's possible—if not certain—that World War III would have immediately followed.

But did this shocking incident—during which nuclear missiles were temporarily activated for launch, at a time when large numbers of witnesses reported a UFO nearby—actually involve a bona fide Unidentified Flying Object? Not according to the producers of a one-hour television program, *Soviet UFO Secrets Revealed*, first broadcast by The History Channel in 2004. In the program, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Dr. Yulii Platov, said that an official investigation had subsequently determined that the object seen hovering near the missile site was, in reality, only a military flare.[5]

According to Platov, this explanation had been quickly agreed upon by members of Institute 22, a Soviet government-sponsored UFO research group, which was sent to investigate the incident immediately after it bad occurred. "They established within a very short period, literally half-a-day, that a military training exercise took place at a nearby [air base]," he said.[6] The program's narrator then explained that the investigations team had learned that a local Soviet army unit had been testing flares, by dropping them from aircraft, at the time of the UFO sightings. Each flare, the team was informed, had provided 5-7 minutes of illumination as it meandering earthward. "That explained the strange display in the sky, the program's narrator solemnly intoned. But did it? Although the program failed to provide any specifics regarding the source of the information about the alleged flare-drop, it seems probable that it originated with I Soviet government

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spokesman, because knowledge of military exercises—including those involving a flare-drop—would have been restricted.

If this "answer" to the mystery did indeed arrive through official channels, then one must ask: Did the Institute 22 team obtain any independent verification that such a flare-drop test had in fact taken place at the time of the UFO sighting? If it did have such confirmation, the program makes no mention of it. So, as far as can be determined, we are apparently left with nothing more than an official Soviet government pronouncement to explain the "real" nature of the UFO.

Setting aside for the moment the fact that the Soviet regime was notorious for issuing countless, calculated lies to its own citizens—and the rest of the world—on every subject imaginable, does the military flare explanation adequately fit the known facts relating to this case? Perhaps not. The History Channel program included an excerpt of an interview with an unidentified former Soviet military officer, who stated that he had sighted the UFO in the dusk sky, at around 6 p.m. "I was riding a motorcycle not far from here," the officer said, "I saw a large object in the air. It had a perfect geometric shape."[7]

A perfect geometric shape? Does that really sound like a falling flare? The officer's statement about the objects form provides a clue as to whether it was likely to have been a military flare. Most of us have observed a flare falling in the sky—either with our own eyes, or at least on film or video. How many of us would describe its appearance as a "perfect geometric shape?" I have personally seen several flares during my life, and none of them were even remotely geometrical in appearance. On the contrary, instead of having regularly-shaped, solid-appearing surfaces, each and every flare was completely irregular in appearance, and constantly changing shape as the ignited magnesium smoked, sputtered and flared.

In short, the Soviet officer's description of the UFO's form as "a perfect geometric shape" certainly does not suggest that he what he had seen was merely a flare. Moreover, as an army officer—who had likely been involved in military exercises at some point during his career—it is probable that he had previously observed a flare-drop and would, therefore, recognize one when he saw it.

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Curiously, the oddly-selective program aired on the History Channel also failed to mention other eyewitness accounts, including one by Lt. Col. Vladimir Plantonev, who stated, "It looked just like a flying saucer… The disk made a beautiful turn… just like a plane. There was no sound. I had never seen anything like that before."[8] Presumably, Colonel Plantonev had also seen military flares at least once during his long career in the Soviet Army.

As previously noted, ABC News had earlier aired Plantonev's comment during its 1994 broadcast about the incident. For whatever reason, the producers of *Soviet UFO Secrets Revealed* chose not to. Furthermore, ABC News also aired this comment by reporter David Ensor: "Every person we spoke to in Byelokoroviche said they saw a flying saucer on that day. They told us it was huge, about 900 feet in diameter. For hours it hovered over the nearby ballistic missile base."[9] That collective eyewitness testimony was entirely ignored in the History Channel program. Why? It seems the program's producers were going with the falling flare explanation, for whatever reason, regardless of the many facts to the contrary.

So it appears that the Soviet investigators on the Institute 22 team had probably been misled by military commanders attempting to throw a security blanket around the alarming event. If a bona fide UFO was actually in the vicinity of the nuclear missile complex—as several Soviet military and civilian witnesses have testified—then the investigations team would almost certainly be kept in the dark about the actual facts, simply because they did not have a "need-to-know" about such a sensitive incident.

In any case, the revelations presented by Colonels Plantonev and Chernovshev, in the much more accurate and unbiased *Prime Time Live* segment, did not surprise me at all. By the time the program aired on ABC in 1994, I had already interviewed over two dozen former or retired U.S. Air Force personnel who had independently divulged their involvement in UFO incidents at our own nuclear missile sites—some of which had apparently involved inexplicable disruptions of the ICBMs' functionality. These individuals' carefully-vetted testimony, although largely uncorroborated by declassified documents, had long ago convinced me that something quite extraordinary and highly significant was occurring—and was also being hidden from public view by the strictest government secrecy. Consequently,

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it seemed likely, even logical to me that if these events had in fact taken place at U.S. ICBM sites, those piloting the UFOs would act even-handedly, so to speak, and monitor Soviet nuclear missile installations as well. Indeed, I had publicly speculated about this probability in the course of my college lectures as early as 1985, nine years before the ABC News story broke.

As with the case at Minot AFB, reported by former Minuteman missile launch officer David Schuur, one very important question must be asked about the incident revealed by Colonel Chernovshev: If the UFO actually triggered the launch sequence, was that the result of some incidental effect, or was it an intentional act? That is, did some aspect of the craft's functioning, perhaps an electromagnetic field, inadvertently initiate the missiles' launch program, or did the UFO's pilots premeditatedly activate it? If the latter were true, what would have been the purpose of such a dangerous and provocative act? With the exception of the incident revealed to me by Schuur, all of the UFO-related malfunctions at U.S. ICBM sites—at least those known to researchers—involved a temporary loss of launch capability, not the temporary activation of the launch sequence.

If the Soviet incident, and/or the one at Minot AFB, did indeed involve a premeditated activation of nuclear missiles, perhaps those responsible already knew that the activation could be interrupted, either by the launch officers or the UFO pilots themselves. Being an optimist, I am inclined to think that this was the case, and believe that the purpose of the activation was to send a message: "You humans are playing with fire!" Of course, I don't know the reason for the activation of the nukes anymore than you do. Let's just hope my optimism is justified.

UFO Landing at Katta-Kurgan

In the May 2005 issue of the *MUFON UFO Journal*, renowned UFO landing-trace specialist Ted R. Phillips reported on an October 1984 UFO sighting in the former Soviet Union, which occurred "quite close" to the Katta-Kurgan tactical nuclear missile base, located in what is now Uzbekistan.[10]

According to a U.S. State Department document titled, *Treaty Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the*

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Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, as of November 1, 1987—some three years after the UFO sighting—the Katta-Kurgan missile base maintained 9 SS-12 nuclear missiles and 5 missile launchers.[11] These mobile, 900 kilometer-range weapons had been deployed for possible use against the USSR's on-again, off-again adversary, The Peoples Republic of China. Given this information, one might reasonably assume that at least some number of SS-12s were deployed at the base at the time of the UFO incident, in 1984.

The sighting was investigated by Dr. S.P. Kuzionov, of Leningrad's Geographical Society, and involved five witnesses, including missile technician Shamil Yuaihmetov, who reported seeing a metallic-appearing, cigar-shaped object slowly descending at a 45-degree angle. As it did so, it emitted a hissing sound. The sighting occurred at 11:45 p.m. but the exact date in October 1984 was not mentioned in Kuzionov's report.

The next day, in a nearby vineyard, three apparent landing-gear marks, in an equilateral triangle pattern, were found within an area of damaged vines measuring 30-meters by 80-meters. Each depression one was a half-meter deep and apparently created by a globe-shaped landing p3(j According to Dr. Kuzionov, the Soviet military investigated the incident, but the findings of that inquiry are not currently available to researchers.

The Soviet Bentwaters

In July 1989, an intriguing UFO incident occurred at the Soviet missile test complex known as Kapustin Yar, located south of the city of Volgograd, in southwestern Russia. By that time, the complex already had a long history of ICBM and IRBM (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile) development. In 1946, the first captured German V-2 rockets were tested there, effectively initiating the Soviets' military and space rocket programs. In 1960-61, tests of the RT-14 IRBM—which played a prominent role in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis—were conducted at the complex. After their removal from Cuba, the RT-l4s were subsequently targeted against Western Europe and China. At the time of the 1989 UFO incident, a group of 12 RT-l4s were operational at Kapustin Yar and spare nuclear warheads were stored in a nearby weapons depot.

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The information about the UFO sighting comes directly from declassified KGB documents, secured by western researchers and journalists following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Don Berliner, of the Fund for UFO Research, notes that the KGB file contained the depositions of seven Soviet military personnel, drawings of the UFO made by some of the observers, and a case summary written by an unnamed KBG officer, from which Berliner excerpted the following passage,

Military personnel of the signal center observed UFOs in the period from 22:12 hrs. to 23:55 hrs. on 28 July 1989. According to the witnesses' reports, they observed three objects simultaneously, at a distance of 3-5 km. After questioning the witnesses, it was determined that the reported characteristics of the observed UFOs are: disc 4-5 m. diameter, with a half-sphere on top, which is lit brightly. It moved sometimes abruptly, but noiselessly, at times coming down and hovering over ground at an altitude of 20-60 m. The command of [censored] called for a fighter... but it was not able to see it in detail, because the UFO did not let the aircraft come near it, evading it. Atmospheric conditions were suitable for visual observations.[12]

Berliner writes, "The most detailed communication was submitted by the Officer-on-Duty, Ensign Valery N. Voloshin. A Captain from the telegraph center informed him at 23:20 hrs. that 'an unidentified flying object, which he called a flying saucer, was hovering over the military unit for over an hour.' After confirming the sighting with the operation signal officer on duty, Ensign Voloshin and Private Tishchayev climbed the first part of an antenna tower." According to [Voloshin's] deposition,

One could clearly see a powerful blinking signal which resembled a camera flash in the night sky. The object flew over the unit's logistics yard and moved in the direction of the rocket weapons [nuclear warhead] depot, 300 meters away. It hovered over the depot at a height of 20 meters. The UFO's hull shone with a dim green light which looked like phosphorous. It was a disc, 4 or 5 m. in diameter, with a semispherical top.

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While the object was hovering over the depot, a bright beam appeared from the bottom of the disc, where the flash had been before, and made two or three circles, lighting the corner of one of the buildings… The movement of the beam lasted for several seconds, then the beam disappeared and the object, still flashing, moved in the direction of the railway station. After that, I observed the object hovering over the logistics yard, railway station and cement factory. Then it returned to the rocket weapons depot, and hovered over it at an altitude of 60-70 m. The object was observed from that time on, by the first guard-shift and its commander. At 1:30 hrs., the object flew in the direction of the city of Akhtubinsk and disappeared from sight. The flashes on the object were not periodical, I observed all this for exactly two hours: from 23:30 to 1:30.[13]

Berliner continues, "Private Tishchayev essentially confirmed Ensign Voloshin's testimony. The guard-shift of Corporal Levin and Privates Bashev, Kulik and Litvinov basically tell the same story. They were all alerted by 1st Lt. Klimenko and they all saw up to three UFOs performing fantastic acrobatics in the sky, such as,

'Suddenly, it flew in our direction. It approached fast and increased in size. It then like divided itself in three shining points and took the shape of a triangle. Then it changed course and went on flying in the same sector.

After veering, it began to approach us and its speed could be felt physically. (It swelled in front of our eyes). Its flight was strange: no aircraft could fly in this manner. It could instantly stop in the air (and there was an impression that it wobbled slightly up and down); it could float (exactly that: float, because the word 'fly' would not be adequate, it was as if the air was holding it, preventing it from falling). At all times that I observed it, it was blinking, blinking without any order and constantly changing colors (red, blue, green, yellow). The point itself was not blinking but something above it.

Here is what I observed: there was a flying object, resembling an egg, but

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flatter. It shone brightly alternating green and red lights. This object gathered a great speed. It accelerated abruptly and also stopped abruptly, all the while doing large jumps up or down. Then appeared a second and then a third object. One object rose to low altitude and stopped. It stayed there in one place and was gone. Later a second object disappeared, and only one stayed. It moved constantly along the horizon. At times, it seemed it landed on the ground, then it rose again and moved.'[14]

Berliner concludes, "It is difficult to make a final evaluation of the Kapustin Yar [incident], since no information about the scramble mission and possible radar tracking has been released by the KGB. But the detailed testimony of seven military witnesses, who were familiar with rocket launches and various aircraft because of their post (Kapustin Yar is somewhat equivalent to the White Sands Proving Grounds in New Mexico), appears to confirm the unusual flight characteristics and extraordinary maneuverability displayed by UFOs in many instances..."[15]

The remarkable UFO incident at Kapustin Yar's nuclear warhead depot, as summarized by the KGB, has obvious parallels with the sighting at the RAF/USAF Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area, in December 1980. In each case, a disc-shaped object hovered at low altitude over (or near) a nuclear weapons storage site and released beams of light down into it, for unknown reasons. When I sent a copy of Berliner's report to Bentwaters' former Deputy Base Commander, now-retired Colonel Charles Halt, he responded simply, "This all sounds very familiar."

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24. Into the Nineties

Credible, independent reports from former or retired U.S. Air Force security and maintenance personnel now exist which confirm that UFO activity at Malmstrom, Ellsworth, and F.E. Warren AFBs has continued, on an intermittent basis, almost to the present day.

For example, in 2002, I stumbled upon a published report by a former Air Force missile security guard, former Staff Sergeant Joseph M. Brown, who had been assigned to the 343rd Missile Security Squadron, at Malmstrom AFB, in the early 1990s. In his report, Brown revealed his own ICBM-related UFO sighting in 1992, which involved at least four Air Force security police posted at two different missile launch facilities. With the assistance of researcher Ron Wright, on whose web site the story was posted (the site now unavailable) I was able to locate and communicate with Brown in April 2003. He provided additional details not included in his on-line account:

One spring night, Brown and his security team partner were posted at Alpha Flight Launch Facility A-03, near Sluice Box Canyon, outside the town of Monarch, Montana. Due to an alarm system malfunction at the site, the two-man team was staked-out in a security camper near the LF, with one man on duty while the other slept. “I believe it was March or April,” Brown told me, “site top-side security was down, the IMPSS System, and if I remember correctly, there was no top-side power. I think we could not even hook our camper up to site power, which really sucks when your out in the middle of nowhere. I don’t know what caused the site to be down, we just got sent out to sit the site. I expect that it was down due to no power. Procedure would have been for the Alarm Response jam to come from the Launch Control Facility to check the site and try restore power, and if that could not be done, to send a camper team or maintenance team.”

Approximately one day after arriving at the site, at about 4:30 a.m., Brown noticed a bright white light moving erratically across the sky. Because of the extreme darkness at the remote site, no landmarks were visible to assist in a determination of its distance. In his online account, Brown had written, “This light was doing some wild things in the sky, sudden direction changes,

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moving very fast, then stopping, then shooting off in another direction. I watched this for about 15 to 20 minutes." Then the light appeared to move closer to the launch facility. "I started getting spooked," Brown wrote, "so I reached out the window of the truck and started banging on the camper shell to wake [my partner] up. He finally came around the front, asking me what was wrong. I pointed to the light and told him I'd been watching it for around 20 minutes and I didn't know what it was. He got into the passenger side of the truck and we kept watching this thing doing its acrobatics."

After a couple of minutes, Brown's partner asked him whether the light should be reported to their superiors. Before doing so, Brown decided to radio another security team posted at LF A-10, located some 10 miles away. "They responded hesitantly that they were watching this light," wrote Brown, "I said to them we could see it too, and asked if they could tell how close it was. They said it appeared very close to their site, maybe within a mile."

The Flight Security Controller (FSC) at the Alpha Flight Launch Control Facility apparently overheard this exchange, because he suddenly broke into the conversation to inquire about the anxious radio chatter between the two security teams. Each confirmed that they were observing the strange light as it raced wildly around the sky. No sooner had Brown reported this, he began to regret it, fearing that "people were going to start thinking we were nuts." He quickly told the FSC that the light was probably a helicopter and "no big deal."

"We continued to watch this thing until around [6:30 to 7:00 a.m.]," Brown wrote, "when it appeared to go straight up into the sky and stop. We could still see the light, but by now it was starting to get daylight. As it got brighter, we could sort of make out a black shape around where the light was. We had binoculars, but even with them, all you could see was a fuzzy outline of sort of a triangle. I can't estimate the height of the object."

At around 7:30 a.m. a missile maintenance team, accompanied b) a Security Escort Team, arrived at the launch facility. "The maintenance guys and the SET team were all asking us what was going on," wrote Brown, "there was a lot of commotion at the base and they had been sent to our site [on short] notice."

In my interview with Brown he added, "The SET guards that came out with

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maintenance were from our security police squadron, and were all asking us, ‘What did you see? We heard you guys saw something.’ The maintenance team were joking around, ‘So, you guys saw a UFO’, that kind of thing. So, obviously people back at the base were talking.” Because of the arriving guards, Brown and his partner were taken off duty at the site and ordered back to the base.

Upon returning to Malmstrom, Brown and his partner privately conferred with the security team posted at Launch Facility A -10. The four guards agreed that they would not mention the sighting, and all expressed concern about possible repercussions resulting from their report to the Flight Security Controller. “We were starting to think that maybe we were going to get into some kind of trouble for saying anything about this,” wrote Brown.

As the security guards returned their weapons to the armory, they were suddenly ordered to report to a captain assigned to their squadron. Brown can not recall the officer’s name but remembers being very concerned by this unexpected development. He wrote, “[The captain] asked me to tell him what I saw, so I said basically just a light, moving around in the sky. He asked, do you think it was a UFO or something like that?” Brown responded that he didn’t know what the light was. “[Then] he asked the other three guys to describe what they saw. They said the same thing and he asked them all, do you think it was a UFO or something. By now they were pretty scared and they said they didn’t know, just a light. At this point, the captain says, well I don’t think you saw anything and I wouldn't go around talking about it. You guys are under PRP, remember that!”

Here is yet another instance in which the mere mention of the PRP—Personnel Reliability Program—effectively intimidated military UFO witnesses into silence. As stated earlier, this Department of Defense directive pertains to those who work with or around nuclear weapons, and dictates their conduct both on and off the job. If an individual’s commanding officer judges his or her behavior to be unreliable, and a potential threat to the security of the weapons, a psychological examination of that person is usually ordered. Depending on its outcome, the individual under scrutiny risks being relieved of duty.

Perhaps Brown’s captain really did not believe that the guards had seen a

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UFO, and was genuinely concerned about their coming under official scrutiny for claiming that they had. But it is also possible that in this case, and perhaps many others, invoking the PRP—with its implied threat of possible action against those who reported a UFO near a missile site—was a deliberate attempt by the Air Force to intimidate these witnesses into maintaining silence about their strange experiences. I asked Brown about this. He replied, "Well, anytime someone threatened to 'PRP' you, you got the message that he means what he says. We got the message that we were not to openly talk about [our UFO sighting]." Consequently, regardless of the Captain's actual motivation, his warning to the guards effectively assured their silence about the incident.

In the account posted on Ron Wrights web site, Brown wrote that because of his concern over what he considered to be his captain's implied threat, he subsequently spoke of his UFO encounter with only a few friends whom he trusted not to repeat the story. Years would pass before he felt comfortable enough to discuss it online.

Interestingly, Brown wrote that a couple of days after his experience at Alpha Flight, he had heard an intriguing rumor: "My wife was very good friends with the wife of a missile maintenance engineer," he recalled, "She told my wife that the night we saw this light, her husband's entire squadron was put on alert and her husband was called in and dispatched to the missile field for some kind of an incident, but she didn't know what it was. She said the base also went on 'general alert' that night, and maybe [our sighting] had something to do with that."

Referring to these rumored developments, Brown told me, "Our friend was at the time a tech sergeant in the maintenance squadron, and it was a bit unusual for him to actually go to out in the field. He normally trouble-shot stuff on-base. He and I never got to really discuss what had happened—it was just one of those things where we knew there were certain things we should not talk about—but he did tell me that a lot of maintenance folks were sent out that night. Quite honestly, a lot of us were afraid to talk about it openly, especially after being told we should not talk about anything by our captain."

In 1997, Brown finally learned of similar incidents which had occurred at Malmstrom AFB in the 1960s. The Sci-Fi Channel program *Sightings* had

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aired interviews with retired Air Force officers Robert Salas and Don Crawford, who described several ICBMs simultaneously malfunctioning in March 1967, just as security guards were reporting UFOs hovering near missile sites or launch control facilities. Brown wrote, "I had no idea that they had missiles go off alert." Surprised and emboldened by the two officers' revelations, he decided to post his own story on the Internet. Even then, however, he asked that his name not be revealed. Only after a direct request by the author, in 2003, did he permit it to be openly used in this book.

Brown is still haunted by his encounter. Reflecting on it a decade later, he told me, "I'm not normally someone who gets spooked by anything. But, [the UFO] scared me. It's not that we felt threatened by this thing—it was just so weird, an almost unbelievable thing that we saw. The aerial maneuvers this thing was doing were definitely not something we had seen before. Then all the weird crap that happened after, just intensified the uneasy feeling we had. You know how it is, you hear all the weird stories and laugh about it, but then when something like that happens, you're kind of in disbelief. But, it was all kind of stunning when I saw this."

"Close Encounters" at Malmstrom in 1993

In an earlier chapter I reported on Combat Targeting Team member John Mills' dramatic UFO experience at Ellsworth AFB, in December 1978. Later in his Air Force career, Mills had been transferred to Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota and, still later, transferred again to Malmstrom AFB, Montana, in June 1992. Some months after his arrival, he had what was probably his third UFO sighting. Although he remains uncertain about the identity of the aerial light he observed, subsequent events later that evening strongly suggest that it was indeed a bona fide UFO. Mills recalled,

This happened, I think, early winter of 1993, maybe January or February. I know it wasn't much after that, because I blew out my back a short time later and ended up with a desk job. Anyway, I was driving back to Malmstrom in a 'six pack' crew cab with another tech sergeant. I can't remember his name. We'd been out at Mike Flight or, maybe it was Kilo Flight, at Kilo-4, I think. It seems like Kilo was closer to Billings than Great Falls—way out there. So

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we took a shortcut, to make time. We were hauling ass on this dirt road and ended up coming out near Monarch. Unfortunately, before we got there, we came up on a bridge that was out and we ended up in a ditch. We spent the next few hours trying to get the crew cab out of it. But we were making routine radio checks [with our dispatcher] the whole time.

Anyway, once we were back on the road, I saw something in the sky. It was a bright light. I don't know what it was. I thought it was a helicopter. I was saying, 'What the hell is a chopper doing out at this time of night?' They usually didn't fly parts out to the sites after dark. lt was considered to be too dangerous.

We both watched the light for a few minutes when, suddenly, it took a 90-degree turn. Not a sharp, angular turn, but definitely a steep bank. We thought it must be air rescue. So we kept going and finally got up to the main road that goes into Great Falls. About a quarter-mile east of Belt, we saw a road block up ahead. Cars were backed up for miles. We said, 'Oh great! We're going to sit here for awhile.' So we called the dispatcher and told him that we would be arriving really late. He confirmed that he knew about the road block, but said he didn't know what was going on.

Then he told us to switch to a different [radio] frequency, so we did. Then he said, 'Did you guys see anything unusual while driving?' We said, 'Naw, we saw a chopper, or what we thought was a chopper.' He asked us where we had seen it and we told him. Then he said, 'Okay, we want you guys to head on up to Alpha-1.' It was right up the road from where we were. On the way there, we got a radio call on the secure channel. It was the dispatcher again, and he started asking us about the light we saw. So, my partner repeated what he saw, and I repeated what I saw. I honestly thought it was a chopper. The dispatcher said, 'Are you sure it was a chopper?' We said we thought so, and described the hard, banking maneuver we saw.' He said, 'Okay, when the traffic clears, come on home.' But we were never debriefed about the light, at least not officially.

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When we got back to base, we found out—unofficially—that there were, uh, 'anomalies' all over the base. We were told that there were several 'anomalies' out at the missile sites. We heard that the 'anomaly' we had seen had come down and landed near the highway west of Belt. They had cordoned-off a zone, just before the big hill near Belt. The other road block was closer to Great Falls, about a mile further west. I don't know who ordered it, maybe the Air Force. I didn't see any Air Force Security Police at the roadblock, but we did see highway patrolmen. Maybe something landed there, as rumor had it, or maybe it was just an accident. I don't know.

All of this was unofficial—the grape vine—we heard all of this back at the maintenance building. Actually, we first heard it from the guys who worked at the Vehicle Equipment Control Branch, who were helping us unload our truck, in the vehicle barn. They said they had seen things flying around the flight line that looked like balls of light, moving around in the air. They were zooming all over the place. [Because of their rapid, unpredictable movements near the runway] they were interfering with a couple of tankers that were trying to land. We were told that one tanker had diverted to Hill [AFB] and the other diverted to Minot [AFB]. At that time we had, I think, six or seven tankers stationed at the base.

According to the people who saw the balls of light, they were different sizes. Some appeared to be really small, others were maybe three-feet in diameter. Some were described as much larger than that. All of them were just zooming around the flight line, erratically, at high speed. We heard all of this that night, when we returned the vehicle. These were first-hand accounts from the people in the vehicle barn, who saw the lights. Now, later on, the rumor-mill started up, and the stories about all of this got better and better. But the first stories we heard were from the eyewitnesses who were on the flight line. They told us that one of the balls of light had even flown in the open doors of the vehicle barn.

I incredulously asked Mills, "It flew right into the barn?!" He replied,

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That's what the guy on the [vehicle] wash-rack said. He told us that a small ball of light flew in the door, flew through the building for few seconds, and flew back out. He said, at first, he'd thought that someone had thrown a softball at him—it was about the size of a softball. He watched it fly above all of the vehicles, at about 10-feet high. Then it shot back out over the flight line again.

When this guy saw it, he called out to another guy running the scheduling booth, located on the southwest corner of the building. They both saw it and went outside and watched it fly over the flight line. One of the guys said there were about six balls of light out there. The other guy said there were hundreds! Now, I don't know, maybe the balls were moving around so fast that it just looked like hundreds. But both of the guys said that they moving all over the place, at high speed, at different altitudes. It was probably hard to judge their actual size, but they seemed to be different sizes, some small, some large—even huge. One of the guys said it reminded him of that scene in Close Encounters [of the Third Kind] *where all the UFOs are swarming around, but choreographed, over the landing pad.*

I asked Mills to estimate how many men in the vehicle barn had witnessed the balls of light. He paused and then said,

Oh, probably four. There were two other guys doing a load test on a Transporter Erector, which was right behind the vehicle barn and the Maintenance Building. They told us they stopped what they were doing because they thought [the softball-sized object] was ball lightning. You can't do that kind of load test in a lightning environment.

None of those guys ever asked us why our vehicle was covered in mud, or why we were covered in mud—from being in the ditch. We figured we would have a lot of explaining to do, about why we took an unauthorized shortcut on a dirt road. But no one asked us anything. Not one question. They were all preoccupied with, I don't know, an unexplained event, an anomaly. All I know

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is that those guys were definitely focused on something.

Mills then said he had later learned that at least two of the men had been asked to make written reports about the incident. “But those guys were still [at Malmstrom] when I retired in 1994, so whatever they said or wrote down was either insignificant or, maybe, so many people had seen the UFOs, [the commanders] couldn’t transfer all of the witnesses [to other bases].”

This statement was an obvious reference to Mills’ earlier experience at Ellsworth AFB, following the UFO incursions at Echo and Delta Flights, when some of the more talkative eyewitnesses were immediately and unexpectedly transferred elsewhere, presumably so they couldn’t discuss their sighting with others at the base.

I asked Mills if any of the balls of light reportedly maneuvering over [lie flight line had been seen near the nuclear Weapons Storage Area, which is located just east of the runway. “Not that we heard about. All the anomalies were over the flight line—the taxi way—west of the runway.”

(Some years before my interview with Mills, I had heard another account—from a former Security Policeman who was stationed at Ellsworth AFB, in 1968—regarding a small ball of light that was observed maneuvering—alternately descending and ascending—directly above one of the India Flight launch facilities.)

Mills then said that even though he and the other tech sergeant had heard that several “anomalies” had been sighted at some of Malmstrom’s missile sites that night, none of the ICBMs had gone-off alert. “We checked on that the next morning. None of the missiles went down.” Given this finding, it would seem that if the rumors of UFOs near Minuteman sites were true, they had apparently not disrupted the missiles’ operational readiness on this particular occasion.

At this point, I told Mills about my earlier conversation with former Air Force Security Policeman Joe Brown, whose assignment at Malmstrom had roughly coincided with his own. As previously noted, Brown had described his own sighting at Alpha Launch Facility A-03, which he thought had occurred in March or April of 1992—less than a year before the incidents at Malmstrom now reported by Mills. Brown said that a friend of his, in the

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missile maintenance squadron, had later cryptically mentioned that "a lot of maintenance folks" had unexpectedly been sent out to the missile fields the night of Brown's sighting at Alpha Flight.

Even though Mills did not arrive at Malmstrom until June 1992, I asked him if he had ever heard rumors about UFO-related, multiple missile shutdowns in the months prior to his arrival at Malmstrom. He quickly dismissed the possibility, saying, "Hmmmm, missiles going off Strat[egic] Alert, for unexplained reasons, in March or April of 1992? No there couldn't have been a large-scale [shutdown] in 1992. I would have known about that. When I was at Grand Forks, and later at Malmstrom, one of my jobs was 'anomaly assessment', where I would go through all of the MDAS (Minuteman Data Analysis System) data. We would correlate various anomalies—not UFOs, just different types of routine failures—with missiles going-off alert. This would allow you to detect trends, so you anticipate or predict a shutdown. I spent two years working on this at Grand Forks, with two other gentlemen, and SAC eventually implemented the analysis [at all its missile bases]."

He continued, "Anyway, at Malmstrom, I had access to data from the previous five years, or maybe it was even longer, maybe 10 years... As I recall, there was no evidence of an *unexplained*, large-scale missile shutdown on a single date. Now, there were flights going on and off at, uh, I can't remember the flights, but we tracked that to a specific component failure...All of a sudden, a whole flight of 'birds' (missiles) would go off Strat Alert. But, we identified that component as the problem and corrective measures were taken. Now, when I looked at the MDAS data [at Malmstrom], going back 10 years or so, I don't recall any occasions when whole flights went off alert for unexplained reasons."

I then asked Mills whether it was possible for someone to have altered the data, to conceal UFO-related incidents, prior to his analysis. I said, "Given your experience at Ellsworth, where information about the UFO-related missile shutdowns at Delta and Echo Flights was systematical suppressed—with people being sworn to secrecy, and some of them being unexpectedly transferred to other bases—is it possible, in your opinion, that the technical data relating to missile shutdowns at Malmstrom had been sanitized to hide UFO involvement in some of them?"

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Mills immediately replied, “No it couldn’t have. I mean, I don't see how the data could have been altered before we saw it. You can delete or suppress written records, you can suppress witness testimony, but you can’t delete the technical data from the computer. It was gathered 24/7, on giant reel-to-reel spools in three different main-frame [computers] but its never looked at. Nobody ever looked at that data. It was collected so that, if there was a problem that was resisting analysis, someone could go in and look at the data. But no one ever did it, that I was aware of, before I and the other two guys began our systematic analysis [at Grand Forks].

He continued, “Now, once we began that process, the things we found were amazing. That’s why SAC later implemented the procedure [at all its ICBM bases]. By the time I got to Malmstrom, I had been doing that type of analysis for two, almost three years. But, no, it would have been very difficult for someone to alter the data, in my opinion, to hide [UFO-related] incidents at the base.”

I interrupted Mills and said, “So, summarizing all of this, based on the data you saw, there was never an occasion at Malmstrom during the previous five, maybe 10 years, when entire flights of missiles went down at the same time, for unexplained reasons?” Mills paused a moment, then said, “Well, as I recall, there were two occasions when launch capsules [at Launch Control Facilities] went down, and we never explained why that happened. I could never figure out why. Unexplained. As I recall, those anomalies occurred at, uh, maybe India-1 and, uh, maybe Sierra-0. (Some of Malmstrom’s LCFs were designated “0”, instead of “1”—a hold-over from an early-1960s numbering-system used at the base.) But at the launch facilities themselves? No, as I remember it, none of the flights—meaning all of the missiles in the flight—went down all at once.”

If Mills is correct on this point, it would seem that the rumor heard by Security Policeman Joe Brown, in the spring of 1992—about large numbers of missile maintenance personnel being sent out on the night of his own UFO sighting—was, if true, not indicative of an entire flight dropping off alert status. On the other hand, it’s possible, if not verifiable at this point, that some number of missiles in different flights simultaneously malfunctioned. But this is of course speculation on my part.

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Malmstrom Again, and Again

On February 2, 1996, U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Jeff Goodrich sighted five triangular-shaped objects above the city of Great Falls, Montana. Standing next to him was First Lieutenant Ken -------, who also saw the unusual objects. Both men were assigned to the 341st Maintenance Squadron at Malmstrom and, at the time of the sighting, were working at the Missile Roll Transfer Building, a remote site located some distance from the main base. Goodrich was Team Chief in Missile Handling, had 19 years' experience as an ICBM maintenance technician, and was nearing retirement. ------- was Officer In Charge of the Missile Handling Team Section.

Fortunately, Goodrich already had a decades-long interest in UFOs, and Was a veteran field investigator for the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON). Immediately after his sighting, he compiled a detailed summary of it, written on a standard MUFON UFO sighting report form.

The sighting at the MRT Building occurred at about 10:45 a.m. "We were moving a piece of equipment outside at the time," Goodrich told me, "I walked out the door and saw Ken ------- looking up into the sky. I asked him what he was looking at and he pointed out the objects." Goodrich quickly located five triangular-shaped craft flying over the city of Great Falls, which is located just west of Malmstrom.

According to Goodrich's report, the objects were about 75-degrees above the horizon when first sighted. They made no sound that the two men could discern, and left no contrails. Due to distance and glare, no surface detail on the craft was visible. Goodrich said the objects flew in unison, moving slowly from north to south. However, on two occasions, they appeared motionless for 10-15 seconds. After the second pause, the objects suddenly picked up speed, made a sweeping arc to the southwest and soon disappeared over the horizon. At the time of the sighting, the weather was clear and sunny, with the temperature about -15-degrees Fahrenheit. Although there were no clouds, the sky near the western horizon was hazy.

Goodrich estimated the objects' altitude to be 15-20,000 feet. This guess was based, in part, on statements made to him by personnel working at the Malmstrom air traffic control tower. After contacting them, Jeff had been told

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that nothing out of the ordinary had been tracked on radar, however, he was also told that the tower didn't track aircraft above 10,000 feet. Goodrich then called Great Falls International Airport, but the controller he spoke to there also denied tracking unknown aircraft.

Assuming that both controllers were being truthful, the fact that the towers' upper limit of detection was 10,000 feet tends to substantiate Goodrich's estimate of the objects' altitude as being above that. However, two other possibilities exist: First, the towers may have indeed tracked the craft, but the controllers simply chose not to reveal that fact. Second, it' possible that the objects possessed a radar-defying, stealth capability—attribute noted in many other UFO sighting cases over the years—and simply could not be tracked on radar.

This last point raises an obvious question: Could the objects observed by Goodrich and -------been a flight of F-117 fighter-bombers, which are indeed stealthy? As a result of its unique design, an airborne F-117 can at times appear to be nearly triangular in shape. Consequently, skeptics might propose such a solution to explain this sighting. However, because both men reported that all five objects hovered briefly—twice—such an explanation seems unlikely. The F-117 is an amazing aircraft, but it can not stop in mid-flight and remain motionless before continuing on its way- Furthermore, Goodrich described the triangular craft as being bright white in color. An F-117 is painted flat black and appears dark against the sky, under all lighting and atmospheric conditions.

Goodrich included two hand-drawn diagrams of the objects in his written report about the sighting. The first depicts their positions relative to one another in the sky, while the second one illustrates each objects shape—an isosceles triangle—with two sides of equal length. According to Goodrich, the third, shorter side was on the trailing edge of the object as it flew.

At the time of this incident, Goodrich was already aware of other UFO sightings by missile personnel, not only at Malmstrom but at Ellsworth AFB as well, where he had been stationed previously. Shortly after I first met him, in 1993, Jeff introduced me to retired Air Force Staff Sergeant Albert Spodnik, who subsequently told me about a UFO-related power failure at Ellsworth's Juliet Flight, in 1966. That incident was discussed at length

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earlier in this book.

Regarding Goodrich's own sighting at Malmstrom, I asked him if he could determine, from his vantage point, whether or not the 'triangular-shaped objects' flight path would have taken them over any missile sites. He replied that after the objects turned southwest, and left the city limits, they would have probably flown over India Flight's missiles. However, he said, it did not appear that they hovered or otherwise lingered in that vicinity. Instead, the objects continued to move steadily away, eventually disappearing over the horizon.

In addition to his written account of this sighting, Goodrich also sent me a second report relating to another UFO incident which had occurred thirteen months earlier. That sighting definitely took place within the boundaries of India Flight's missile field, and the unknown aerial object was simultaneously observed by an Air Force security team and a missile maintenance team.

According to Goodrich's written report for MUFON, around midnight on January 19/20, 1995, an Alert Response Team, composed of two Air Force security police, was driving to the India Flight Launch Control Facility when they noticed a strange light in the dark southern sky. As they passed by Launch Facility 1-04, one of the men radioed a missile maintenance team working there, and asked its leader if they could see the light as well. The response was affirmative. The missile maintenance technician who later told Goodrich about the sighting said that the large light had numerous smaller lights on it—red, orange, yellow, green, and blue in color. It was moving very slowly across the missile field, at low altitude. The technician insisted that the object was definitely not an airplane or a helicopter.

Remarkably, a few minutes after both teams sighted the UFO, the maintenance team observed a "very large green fireball" racing across the sky. It was so bright that it lit up the inside of their truck. According to the maintenance technician, the fireball sighting occurred around midnight or shortly thereafter, after the team had finished its work and was returning to Malmstrom.

Later that same day, the *Great Falls Tribune* featured an article about one, or perhaps several, green fireballs that were reported by persons all over

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western Montana.[1] The following day, the paper carried an Associated Press article which said the fireball(s) had been seen from Great Falls to central Washington state.[2]

The second article quoted one of the witnesses living in Bigfork, Montana. Jeff Bernard, a high school earth science and physics teacher, was observing winter constellations with some students when one of the fireballs blazed through the sky. According to Bernard, the fireball, appearing as large as the full moon, was seen for 3-4 seconds at around 8 p.m. on Thursday, January 19th—the approximate time given for all of the other sightings mentioned in both newspaper articles. This is somewhat curious because, if the missile technician who spoke with Goodrich was correct, the green fireball sighted at India Flight occurred hours later, probably just after midnight on the 20th. Perhaps he was simply mistaken about the timing.

Regardless, based on the available evidence, it appears that the green fireball or fireballs—which some witnesses described as bluish in color—were probably meteors. Astronomer Walter Webb, who also researched UFOs for many years, later investigated the fireball sightings in the Northwest that night and concluded that the objects were natural in origin. Webb says that their estimated velocities and trajectories, as well as the observed fragmentation of one of them, all seem to suggest this explanation. Furthermore, unless evidence to the contrary emerges. Webb believes that the green fireball reported by the missile maintenance team should probably be viewed as a meteor as well.

However, the first object sighted by the missile maintenance team, and the two security police, clearly does not fit the meteor scenario. According to at least one of the witnesses, its appearance and flight characteristics were markedly different than the fireball sighted a short time later. Indeed, all of the fireballs sighted elsewhere in Montana, Idaho and Washington were described as rapidly-moving objects, high in the sky, which were visible for only a few seconds. By contrast, the brilliant UFO reported by the missile teams had moved slowly, at low altitude, and in a controlled manner. It was clearly a craft of some kind and had numerous, multicolored lights on its surface. Moreover, it was observed long enough for the security police team to radio the maintenance team, to inquire about it, and remained visible throughout that conversation. Whatever the actual duration of the

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observation, it had to be significantly longer than 3-4 seconds, which was the estimated period of the fireball sightings.

I defer to Webb's extensive investigation of the fireballs, and accept his natural origin-explanation for them. Nevertheless, a precedent exists where both a structured UFO and an almost certainly artificial "fireball" were sighted, within a few hours of one another, by persons working at a nuclear weapons site. Decades earlier, the following report was filed: "(Kirtland AFB OSI Agent Melvin E.] Neef reports blue fireball visible from Sandia [Base] at 0530, 17 February 1949, and a yellow-orange cigar-shaped light at 1759, visible until 1806, 17 February."[3]

I refer to that particular blue fireball as probably artificial in origin, given the context of the sighting. As noted elsewhere, during that period of time, numerous fireballs were sighted over a several month-period by observers at Sandia and Los Alamos laboratories. According to the principle investigator, Dr. Lincoln La Paz, those objects were artificially-constructed missiles of unknown origin—a conclusion based on witness reports of obvious maneuvers, in some cases, as well as the fireballs' tight clustering in northern New Mexico and west Texas. Naturally-occurring fireballs would be expected to have a more random, worldwide distribution.

Hovering Over the Hanger at Ellsworth

Just before midnight on October 27, 1992, two members of the 44th Reid Missile Maintenance Squadron (FMMS) at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, were driving to work. Airman 1st Class Michael R. Reager, a vehicle controller, and Airman 1st Class Jason H. Berrier, a Minuteman Electro-Mechanical Team technician were approaching the squadron's operations hangar, when they saw something extraordinary in the sky. A group of bright, white lights suddenly appeared, moving rapidly in rigid formation. While no solid object was actually visible, the fact that the lights did not vary in their positions relative to one another led the witnesses to concluded that they were arranged across the surface of a very large but unseen craft. (As opposed to being a group of fully-illuminated, independently-maneuverable aerial objects).

As Reager and Berrier watched in amazement, the light formation moved

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directly toward the Minuteman missile maintenance hangar, hovered over it momentarily, and then moved away, disappearing behind a bank of low clouds. Both of the observers estimated that, at its closest approach, the object was approximately a quarter-mile from them, as they drove toward the hangar. Berrier, who saw the UFO first, said that the sighting lasted 10 seconds. Reager, who saw the object only after Berrier brought it to his attention, estimated that it was in view for five seconds. Given these estimates, the duration of the hover over the hangar would have been extremely brief.

Upon arriving at work, the startled eyewitnesses excitedly told those present about the sighting. At that time of night, there wasn't much happening at the hangar and it was relatively empty except for a handful of people in the vehicles and equipment sections.

The next day, another missile maintenance technician, Jeff Goodrich, also learned of the incident. As noted earlier, Goodrich was a certified field investigator for the Mutual UFO Network. Using that organization's standard sighting questionnaire, he had Reager and Berrier independently record the details of their experience less than two days later.[4]

Reager wrote, "It was kind of foggy out...When I first saw it, I though! it was an airplane, but it moved too smooth and swiftly without noise. I couldn't believe it. I was totally amazed. It was an awesome sight. It seemed to hover about three-to-five hundred feet over the ground and [then] it just sort of disappeared in the air."

In his report, Berrier wrote, "I noticed it when I looked out over the hangar where I work. I pointed it out to Mike, who was driving. At first I thought it was an airplane but it was way too big. There were no Hashing lights like on most planes and [its] shape was like no plane I've ever seen. I was freaked out [and] Mike almost ran off the road, trying to get a better look at it...It disappeared behind the clouds above the base."

Each airman made drawings of the UFO itself, as well as its position in the sky, relative to the hangar. In Reager's picture, the lights appear similar to a string of pearls, delineating the presumed boundary of an unseen kidney bean-shaped object. Berrier drew essentially the same picture, but with some of the lights positioned away from object's edge. He also depicted it as

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having more of a boomerang shape (although, oddly, elsewhere in the questionnaire, he referred to its shape as "snake-like").

Reager drew the UFO hovering directly over the missile maintenance hangar, whereas Berrier depicted the object approaching the facility from the north, and (as indicated by an arrow) moving into the cloud bank.

Elsewhere on the questionnaire, in the section titled, "Object Description", Reager wrote that the UFO's apparent width had been "2-3 times the size of a full moon". Berrier instead described the lights, writing that each one appeared "2-3 times the size of a star." However, in the "Personal Account" section, he wrote that the object itself had been much larger than an airplane and, in one of his drawings of the entire cluster of lights, he added the caption, "Approx. 300 ft. long."

There are some minor variations in the witnesses' accounts, as is typical when more than one observer later describes the same event, whether it is an automobile accident, a street crime, or a UFO sighting. For example, Reager described the lights as "bright white". Berrier wrote that they had been "white and reddish". Nevertheless, the two reports are essentially the same. Neither sighting witness was officially debriefed. It is unknown whether the UFO appeared on radar.

The Kid Was Terrified

In 2002, I interviewed "John Blake" by email and telephone. In the mid-1990s, Blake had been a Minuteman missile launch commander at EE. Warren AFB. His various comments have been combined in the following synopsis. Blake asked me not to identify him and to delete certain other information, therefore, I have done so. He told me,

Here is my best recollection of strange things that happened at Warren. Except where noted, none of these are first-hand recollections. Also, I can only give you vague time-frames, as I do not have any dates in front of me or that I am able to recall.

I was assigned to the 319th Missile Squadron at F.E. Warren and pulled over

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100 alerts from 1993-1997. I only pulled alerts in years 1993, 1994 and 1995; the remaining years I was in office positions. Most of my alerts were pulled at ------- and --------. I suspect you are aware of [those sites'] physical locations so I will not make mention of them here.

In the 319th, most of the unusual events happened either at Bravo or at ------. I was part of the flight crew at ------ for 7 months. It was very rare that I pulled alerts at Bravo. Any time an event occurred it was between the hours of [midnight and 4:00 a.m.], There may have been incidents either before or after that time-frame, but my recollection is that those things always happened at the more oddball hours. I recall this because my sleep-shifts on alert were such that I was awake during those hours.

The only event about which I truly have first-hand knowledge involved a security indication at one of ---- --'s launch facilities. I no longer recall the exact LF, but it was due north of where ------ was located—again I assume you know the geography out there. Anyway, an outer-zone security indication alerted me that something might be going on at this LF. Outer-zone means above-ground and not in the immediate vicinity of the missile. I notified our security troops who went begrudgingly. The area around ------ had always been rumored by our cops to be somewhat haunted and very spooky. The younger, new cops could be expected to believe stuff like that, but I always heard those types of things from the older, more non-plussed cops.

During this particular event, I believe the cop crew that went out to check the security indication was a mix of experienced and new. [Before they left] we went through our normal checklist procedures and I thought nothing more of it. However, when they returned home—although they did not say exactly what they had seen—they were really trying hard to get me to promise that they would never have to go check that LF again at night. I son of laughed it off, but they were pretty persistent.

As for the other [incidents], one of the rare alerts I pulled at Bravo resulted

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in my hearing two different stories [relating to] previous security events. They occurred during the same time-frame as the incident I just described, and I remember this LF due to the nature of the story: B-02. I was told that whenever a security indication happened at Bravo-02 at that particular time of night, the [Security Alert Team] was almost guaranteed to see something out of the ordinary. Once again, I did not see or hear about either of these first-hand, so take them for what they are worth.

In the first incident, a friend of mine, a cop, had gone out to check out a security indication at this LF with a brand new and very young cop. As they approached the LF, they were 'buzzed' by a formation of lights. I don't recall whether or not my friend said there was any kind of noise or disruption. I do recall that he was 100% certain that the lights were not helicopters or low-flying U.S. aircraft. He was positive that the way the lights were arranged did not make any sense for any type of actual aircraft. He mentioned that the kid he was with was terrified. They returned to Bravo and were debriefed by the flight leader, who was an officer, to find out what had spooked them so much. At that point in time, they were told to never bring up the incident again to anyone. If I recall correctly, they were formally sworn to secrecy. I believe I recall that the young cop eventually had to start seeing the base psychologist as he was truly devastated by the experience.

In the second incident, my friend related to me that they had come across mutilated cattle close by this same LF on another night. There were no blood spatters or signs of distress, but the tongue and internal organs, I think he said, were missing.

I felt my friend, the cop, was a pretty reliable source. I do know that the Air Force—especially in the missile fields—is very tight-lipped about unusual or strange events. I do not feel it is to cover anything up, but more in the manner of CYA, or cover-your-ass. The missile career field is an 'eat-your-young' kind of profession and any sign of weakness or anything from the norm will most likely prevent you from going up through the ranks and will bring undue attention from the chain of command.

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This is truly all that I know. I am curious to hear other stories from people [who worked in the missile field]. I am sure that if I had pulled more alerts I would have heard more stories. I trusted those cops with my life, so I trusted them when they told me these things.

Other Sightings at F.E. Warren

There is further anecdotal evidence that UFO activity occurred at F.E. Warren in the mid-1990s, as well as during the current decade. The National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) has posted accounts relating to two different UFO sightings by individuals who were stationed at the base over the last several years. Although I have not personally investigated these reports, for what it's worth, they ring true to me. Therefore, I have inserted them below, with minor corrections relating to spelling and grammar.

Sometimes, many years pass before a sighting witness discovers the NUFORC website and decides to post his or her story. Moreover, sometimes there is a time-lag between NUFORC receiving a report and actually posting it, due to the frequently high-volume of incoming reports, as well as to other considerations.

The first posted report:

Occurred: 6/15/1994 23:45 (entered as: 00/00/94 2345)

Reported: 8/13/2002 3:00:26 AM

Posted: 3/21/2003

Location: Cheyenne, WY

Shape: Light

Duration: 30 Seconds

Star-like object over F. E. Warren AFB, WY

At [that] time I was in the USAF and I frequently went to the gym to work-

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out. The chow hall was open for Midnight Chow at 2400hrs. I had finished my workout and was standing outside the chow hall alone waiting for it to open (it was 2345hrs). The night was extremely clear and I could see tons of stars. I am an avid star watcher so this was a great time to just stop and look up. I noticed an extremely bright star and stared at it for a moment. Then it seemed to move and I looked at it harder and it almost seemed as if it noticed me. I'm sure that it didn't, but the reason I say that is because when it moved, and I really started to look at it, it zipped down so fast. As it zipped, I thought immediately that it was a shooting star. But then it stopped. Then it zipped across the sky to the left—and I would have to estimate [it covered] 100 miles in airspace or more within a split second—then it stopped again, zipped back to almost the same location, only this time higher up. Then it zipped [to] what appeared to be straight up [overhead] and then it was gone.

I cannot be sure of the actual distance this object was traveling, but I know for a fact that there is no craft that the USAF has that can travel at such speeds [or fly] the flight pattern that this craft was making. Picture an odd-shaped triangle. It started at the top, zipped down, then to the left, then back up to almost its original position. Then—poof—it was gone. There were no sounds whatsoever.

Now to confirm something: Where I grew up in California, I was lucky to see the SR-71 Blackbird fly many, many times. I saw the SR-71 go sonic and let me tell you that was one fast plane—really, really fast—but there is a catch to [such] speed and that is a Sonic Boom. When that plane went Mach-whatever, there was a boom that shook my whole house.

Last note: No pilot could withstand the g-forces that this object would have created—to instantaneously move [and travel] the distance [at the] speed this object was traveling at. This was no slow-motion thing [but rather] zip, zip, zip, gone. I will never forget this and am only reporting it now because I was working with nuclear weapons at the time and could have been considered crazy for reporting such a thing and lost my security clearance. I made a simple drawing of the pattern-of-flight. If you would like it, just let me

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know and I would be happy to send it.

(NUFORC Director Peter Davenport notes that the above date is approximate and wrote, 'We will invite the witness to try to pin down the date as accurately as possible. We have assigned an arbitrary date of Jun 15, 1994, so that the report sorts to that year.") [5]

The second posted report:

Occurred: 10/15/2001 03:00

Reported: 9/7/2003 11:58:38 AM

Posted: 9/9/2003

Location: Chugwater, WY

Shape: Light

Duration: 30 seconds

I was serving at F.E. Warren AFB in Wyoming. I was on duty in the Missile Field doing the night shift. I was actually at the Romeo [Launch Control Facility]...I went outside to smoke a cigarette and saw an extremely bright light in the sky. It wasn't huge, it looked about the size of a plane you'd see in the air. The light moved around [slowly] for about 20 seconds then, all of the sudden, it flew away very fast, leaving a white bright tail behind it. I thought I was going nuts or was just possibly sleep-deprived, but when I told another flight mate of mine, he told me that he, as well as many others, had seen the exact same thing over the skies of Wyoming late at night on numerous occasions. I had only seen it once, but it I know for a fact that it wasn't a plane, and it wasn't a blimp, and no shooting star moves around slowly for approximately 20 seconds and then just shoots off.

(NUFORC Director Peter Davenport notes that the above date is approximate.) [6]

Taken together, all of the incidents mentioned in this chapter strongly support the notion of a continuing UFO presence at U.S. (and probably

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Russian) ICBM sites, even as our new century unfolds. While it may take years or even decades for significant numbers of military personnel to come forward with their on-the-scene stories about these more recent events, preliminary indications suggest that the UFO incidents in the 1990s, and later, are not much different than those of earlier eras. Admittedly, while no credible anecdotal evidence is yet available, as far as I know, pointing to the types of full-flight missile shutdowns—such as those at Malmstrom in 1967, or at Ellsworth in 1978—I suspect that such cases have indeed occurred more recently, but continue to remain hidden for the moment.

On the other hand, perhaps the more dramatic of the UFO incursions at missile sites occurred only in the past, and are either very rare or non-existent nowadays. That said, I personally doubt this scenario and will venture an educated guess that as long as nuclear weapons exist, whatever their numbers, those piloting the UFOs will be snooping around them and occasionally interfering with their operation.

In any case, I am always ready and willing to receive information from ex-servicemen and women, of any nationality, who can shed some light on this subject. Therefore, I will ask here for those with legitimate information about nuclear weapons-related UFO activity—especially in recent years—to contact me. No active duty personnel, please.

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25. Ongoing Civilian Sightings

The declassified government documents relating to UFO sightings near the Los Alamos nuclear weapons laboratory are from the late 1940s and early 1950s. Nevertheless, although they are rarely reported in the media, similar incidents have continued to occur in the lab's vicinity. On the evening of Saturday, July 20, 1996, a friend of mine was camping in the Jemez Mountains, some 20 miles west of Los Alamos. As he and his family were settling in for the night, they noticed a "satellite" traversing the dark, star-filled New Mexican sky. But as they watched, the small white light instantly changed course with a sharp, 45-degree turn. Obviously, the object was not a satellite, meteor, or aircraft.

Puzzled by what they had seen, the campers commented on the strange light, and speculated about what it may have been. A few minutes later, however, something far more dramatic caught their eye. A round, white light, far larger than a star or planet, had seemingly appeared out of nowhere and began to hover directly overhead. Suddenly, five smaller white lights were seen racing across the sky—three from one direction, too from another—all flying directly toward the larger object. As the family watched in astonishment, the small lights merged with it. Seconds later, two identical lights burst from the object and flew away at high speed. Then the larger object simply disappeared. "It sort of expanded or exploded or something," my friend said, as he described the experience two days later, "Then it just vanished!"

Later that week, the witness approached me again and excitedly said that a Santa Fe resident had video taped a UFO on the same night that he and his family had their sighting in the Jemez mountains. Santa Fe is approximately 35 miles southeast of Los Alamos. The video tape had been aired on one of the local Albuquerque television stations, and the incident was reported in the Santa Fe *New Mexican* on July 23rd. In the article, Patrick Ortiz said that he had begun taping the UFO at about 3 a.m. "I couldn't sleep, so I opened the door because it was hot and looked up. It looked like a star at first, then it started changing color. I woke up my girlfriend, and then got the video cam and called my dad."

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The newspaper reported, “On the video Ortiz took, the white disk had two notches in it and appeared round one minute and saucer-shaped as it moved. Lights blinked at one end, and its color changed from [white to] green to purple. It would hover for a matter of minutes, then move erratically. Ortiz taped more than three hours of the object hovering in the sky.”

Los Alamos, Thirteen Years Earlier

After interviewing my friend about his sighting west of Los Alamos, I began to search the Internet, attempting to learn whether other campers had reported the UFOs in the Jemez Mountains that July weekend in 1996. While I could find no corroborating reports, another, earlier account caught my eye. Patricia Hoyt, a freelance writer living in Florida, posted this summary of her own experience:

[A recently-reported sighting in Georgia] reminded me of a UFO I saw near Los Alamos, NM, Monday evening of Memorial Weekend, 1983. A friend and I were camping when we saw a round white light moving slowly on the ground in a zigzag pattern on the side of a hill, several miles to the east. We assumed it was an army tank on maneuvers, as it would go over the hill, disappear, and return to our side of the hill. After about fifteen minutes of zigzagging, it suddenly rose into the sky and hovered over the hill for about five minutes. Not really believing in UFOs at that time, I thought it was a Harrier jet as I groped for a ‘logical explanation.’

As the white light hovered over the hill, it suddenly expanded so fast, (like a controlled explosion) to about 500 times its original size. It floated obliquely to the south and much nearer to us. My friend and I felt like targets and were terrified. We jumped into our rental car but the car wouldn’t start, it was completely dead. Strangely reasoning that ‘they’ wanted the car, we got back out.

The object stopped at 2,500 feet up and about 2000 feet from us. lt was shaped like a huge disk with a flat side facing us. I heard a quiet, pulsating,

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high-pitched hum that almost made my ears hurt. I felt the hair on my head and arms rise, as if static electricity was strong. At arm's length the object would have been [the length of a yardstick] in diameter. It began to slowly flip over, backwards. As it flipped over, the thin edge of the disk was completely transparent—we could see stars through it. As it flipped over to its other side, it was opaque again and was bright red like a huge neon sign.

It paused for a second and seemed to 'take a deep breath,' then it suddenly zoomed off to the size of a little star and 'got lost' among the other stars. Our car started fine after that. It forced me to realize that UFOs are real, and that our conventional science does not have the proper tools or paradigms to study this phenomenon.[1]

I note here that Hoyt's description of the UFO suddenly expanding "like a controlled explosion" is quite similar to my friend's comment about the UFO he saw west of Los Alamos, some 13 years later, having "expanded or exploded or something" before disappearing.

Moreover, in the spirit of candor, I suppose I should add that, one night in 2001, I saw a very similar phenomenon at my house in Placitas, New Mexico, roughly 30 miles south-southwest of Los Alamos. As I sat on my patio, I noticed a single, bright red light in the sky heading on a north-northeastern flight path from Albuquerque to Placitas. Just as the light passed east of my house, less than half-a-mile away, it suddenly but steadily expanded to perhaps 20 to 30 times its previous diameter and, after perhaps five seconds, steadily returned to its previous size. While this dazzling transformation was occurring, the light kept moving at a constant velocity, on a course that would have taken it over, or just east of, Los Alamos. There was no noise of any kind. Stupidly, I neglected to record the date of the incident.

Intercept Attempt Near Kirtland AFB

On January 29, 1998, an acquaintance of mine, who I will call Gene, witnessed a rather intriguing event at his ranch, south of Albuquerque, near the town of Los Lunas. Gene was an electrical engineer employed at Philips

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Semiconductors, where I worked as well.

Just after sunset, while out feeding his cattle, he noticed a bright white light in the southern sky. It was moving toward the city and did not seem to be associated with any noise. After a few seconds, Gene began to hear from behind him what sounded like a military jet, rapidly approaching Almost immediately, he saw the mysterious light abruptly alter its course and begin to move away from Albuquerque. Moments later, an F-l5 (0r F-l 6) roared overhead, flying directly toward it. Fascinated, Gene watched the jet close on the rapidly-receding light for a few seconds. Suddenly, it accelerated dramatically, leaving the jet far behind. Before he lost sight of it. Gene estimated that the UFO was traveling roughly four times faster than the pursuing aircraft.

Perhaps noteworthy is the fact that Gene's ranch is located on the southern perimeter of one of the most restricted pieces of real estate in America. The Air Force, the Department of Energy, the Defense Nuclear Agency and other government groups operate a multitude of research, test, and storage facilities there. The most secure of these is the 300,000 square-foot Kirtland Underground Munitions Storage Complex, which houses one of the largest nuclear weapons stockpiles in the U.S. While the government will officially neither confirm nor deny the presence of this facility, it is nevertheless an open secret, and its activation in 1992 was widely reported in the local media. Kirtland Air Force Base is located on the northern end of the sprawling complex of restricted sites and is home to both F-16 and F-l 5 jet fighters. While it can not be proven, it is all but certain that the base's radar tracked the UFO that Gene witnessed and someone, undoubtedly concerned about its proximity to so many highly sensitive facilities, scrambled the jet to intercept it.

Coincidentally, this was not the first UFO that Gene had sighted near a nuclear-related facility. In 1967, while working as an ecologist at the Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, near Idaho Falls, he and several security guards watched a luminous round object hover high above the lab for several minutes before moving away at high speed. This facility has for decades designed and tested nuclear reactors, including those used by U.S. submarines, as well as other components used for military applications.

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Savannah River Again

The Savannah River Plant, in South Carolina, apparently continue' to be a focal point for UFO activity as late as the mid-1980s, and perhaps beyond. A deferred sighting report from an eyewitness was posted on the National UFO Reporting Center website in 2003:

Occurred: 9/16/1986 18:00

Reported: 6/21/2002 7:56:49 PM (19:56)

Posted: 3/4/2003

Location: New Ellington, SC

Shape: Other

Duration: 90 seconds

While driving near a nuclear [weapons] plant in South Carolina, my wife and I spotted a wingless, oblong shaped aircraft. We were driving on a road alongside Savannah River Nuclear Plant, around 6-6:30 p.m. I noticed overhead a low-flying aircraft, the lights were on like [one would see on] aircraft, and I noticed that there were no wings and I turned to my wife and asked her 'what is that?' It made NO noise and was almost as if it were 'coasting' in the air. It wasn't moving fast, it wasn't moving slow. My wife screamed for me to get out of there...LEAVE! But, being curious, I turned onto a little side road and turned around, my wife was about frantic as I got out of the car, just wanting me to leave! It shifted from a western heading to a northern heading. It didn't point that way, it just 'slid' that way. I couldn't see it after it passed over the trees.[2]

END OF POSTED MESSAGE

The Phoenix Objects, aka the Phoenix Lights

(No, they weren't flares.)

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As far as I know, this spectacular UFO mass-sighting had no connection with nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, several aspects of the case illustrate various sub-themes in this book. For example, the UFO phenomenon's periodic "in-your-face" display behavior, perhaps designed to accelerate an awareness of its reality and presence. Additionally, despite the absence of widespread public panic following the stunning aerial exhibition, a now-obvious cover-up was implemented by Air Force and civilian officials, undoubtedly intended to prevent just such a panic. For these reasons and others, I believe the case of the Phoenix "Lights" warrants a brief discussion here.

On the evening of March 13, 1997, around 8:30 p.m., a huge wedge-shaped UFO slowly and silently glided at low altitude across the city of Phoenix, stopping to hover at least once. While motionless, a line of piercingly bright lights on its leading edges gradually became illuminated, one-by-one, before extinguishing, again one-by-one. Then the mammoth craft—estimated by some observers as being two-miles wide—drifted away into the night.

One eyewitness of note, Arizona Governor Fife Symington, was staggered by the vision before his eyes but chose to keep his silence about the UFO for years to come. (He finally admitted his sighting in the documentary, *Out of the Blue*, which first aired on the Sci-Fi Channel in 2003.) However, many other witnesses swamped television and radio stations, as well as police stations, with excited and sometimes frantic calls. Fortunately, many witnesses had videotaped the nearly unbelievable spectacle, thus providing evidence for its reality.

Later that night, just before 10 p.m., an irregular string of drifting, sputtering lights was seen slowly falling earthward, southwest of the city'. These too were videotaped. Some two months later, amid continuing public fascination with the events of March 13th, the Air Force announced that a visiting group of Maryland Air National Guard helicopters had dropped military flares as part of a training exercise being held at Luke AFB's Barry M. Goldwater Firing Range. These flares, said the Air Force, were the source of the many reports of the Phoenix Lights that night. Not surprisingly, there was not even a hint of the earlier mass-sighting of the huge UFO—which nearly every observer, including Governor Symington, had described as a V-shaped or wedge-shaped craft having fixed, regularly-spaced lights attached

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to its leading edges.

On July 13, 2007—a decade after incident—ex-governor Symington went on CNN's *Larry King Live* program and candidly described his experience. He not only admitted to having seen the huge object himself but also confessed to participating in what amounted to a cover-up of the spectacular event, although he chose to side-step that particular characterization of his actions. The key portion of the interview follows here:

KING: "Fife Symington now joins us, the former Republican Governor of Arizona, who in 1997 ridiculed an infamous UFO sighting by thousands of people in his state, and recently admitted he was wrong… You were wrong because—?"

SYMINGTON: "Well, I saw the Phoenix Lights, along with hundreds, if not thousands, of other people, and when I saw them on that day in March, I didn't say anything about it, and then the whole issue came back up the following June, with the big USA Today article, and there was sort of a frenzy about it, and so I felt a little levity wouldn't hurt, so we did a spoof over the alien invasion, if you will, and I think a lot of people misunderstood what I was doing. I, we were just having fun, trying to lighten people up."

KING: "So you now acknowledge what?"

SYMINGTON: "Well, I acknowledge I saw a craft. I was up in the Sunny Slope area [of the city] around 8-o'clock at night and I went out to look to the west, where all the news channels were filming the Phoenix Lights and, to my astonishment, this large, sort of delta-shaped, wedge-shaped craft, moved silently over the valley, over Squaw Peak, uh, dramatically- large, uh, very distinctive leading edge with some enormous lights, and it just went on down to the southeast valley. And I was just absolutely stunned because I was turning to the west, looking for the distant Phoenix Lights, and all of a sudden this apparition appears and..."

KING: "And it was not an airplane?"

SYMINGTON: "No, it was definitely not an airplane, and not [U.S. Air Force] A-10s, and it was certainly not high-altitude flares, 'cause flares don't fly in formation."

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ANOTHER PANELIST: "He's a pilot. [He was] a captain in the Air Force."

KING: "A captain in the Air Force. So was it from outer space?"

SYMINGTON: "I think it was from another world. I've never seen anything like it, Larry. It was enormous, uh, it's nor like anything I've ever seen and, um, it was all over the news. Hundreds, if not thousands of people saw it..."

KING: "And it was huge, right?"

SYMINGTON: "Right! So, I know of no other explanation unless the phantom 'Skunk Works' [Lockheed Martin Aircraft Company's experimental aircraft facility] has something cooking that we don't know about."[3]

King then moved on. What Symington didn't say, or perhaps didn't have a chance to say, was that even if the Lockheed Martin folks did have a two mile-wide, silent, wedge-shaped aircraft, capable of hovering, they certainly wouldn't have flown such a sensational, secret vehicle over a major metropolitan area, where its existence would be exposed to thousands, and potentially hundreds of thousands, of citizens who had no need-to-know about it.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the UFO-related event commonly known as the "Phoenix Lights" did not merely involve a single enormous craft briefly appearing over one location. Instead, the sightings that night were geographically dispersed and complex in detail. Peter Davenport Director of the National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) has published an excellent chronological summary of the most significant events:

At approximately 6:55 p.m. (Pacific) on Thursday, March 13, 1997, a young man in Henderson, Nevada, reportedly witnessed a V-shaped object, with six large lights on its leading edge, approach his position from the northwest and pass overhead. In his subsequent written report to the National UFO Reporting Center, he described it as appearing to be quite large, approximately the 'size of a (Boeing) 747', and said that it generated a sound which he equated to that of 'rushing wind.' It continued on a straight line toward the southeast and disappeared from his view over the horizon.

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This sighting is perhaps the earliest of a complex series of events that would take place during the next 2-3 hours over the states of Nevada, Arizona, and possibly New Mexico, and which would quickly become known as the 'Phoenix Lights' sightings. It involved sightings by tens, or perhaps even hundreds, of thousands of witnesses on the ground, and it gave rise to a storm of controversy over what had caused the event.

The next reported sighting was from a former police officer in Paulden, AZ. He had just left his home at approximately 8:15 p.m. (Mountain), and was driving north, when he looked out the driver's window of his car to the west and witnessed a cluster of five reddish or orange lights. The formation consisted of four lights together, with a fifth light seemingly 'trailing' the other four. Each of the individual lights in the formation appeared to the witness to consist of two separate point sources of orange light.

The witness immediately returned to his home, obtained a pair of binoculars, and watched as the lights disappeared over the horizon to the south. He watched the lights for an estimated 2 minutes, and reported that they made no sound that he could discern from his vantage point on the ground.

Within a matter of minutes of these first sightings, a 'blitz' of telephoned reports began pouring into the National UFO Reporting Center, to other UFO organizations, to law enforcement offices, to news media offices, and to Luke Air Force Base. They were submitted from Chino Valley, Prescott, Prescott Valley, Dewey, Cordes Junction, Wickenburg, Cavecreek, and many other communities to the north and west of Phoenix.

Witnesses were reporting such markedly different objects and events that night that it was difficult for investigators to understand what was taking place. Some witnesses reported five lights, others seven, or even more. Some reported that the lights were distinctly orange or red, whereas others reported distinctly white or yellow lights. Many reported the lights were moving across the sky at seemingly high speed, whereas others reported they

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moved at a slow (angular) velocity, or they even hovered motionless for several minutes.

These apparent discrepancies, together with the large number of communities from which sightings were being reported in rapid sequence, raised early suspicions that multiple objects were involved in the event, and that they perhaps were traveling at high speed. These suspicions would be borne out over subsequent months, following extensive investigation by many individuals. The investigations pointed to the fact that several objects, all markedly different in appearance, and most of them almost unbelievably large, passed over Arizona that night.

One group of three witnesses, located just north of Phoenix, reported seeing a huge, wedge-shaped craft with five lights on its ventral surface pass overhead with an eerie 'gliding' type of flight. It coursed to the south and passed between two mountain peaks to the south. The witnesses emphasized how huge the object was, blocking out up to 70-90 degrees of the sky.

A second group of witnesses, a mother and four daughters near the intersection of Indian School Road and 7th Avenue, were shocked to witness an object, shaped somewhat like a sergeants stripes, approach from over Camelback Mountain to the north. They report that it stopped directly above them, where it hovered for an estimated 5 minutes. They described how it filled at least 30-40 degrees of sky, and how it exhibited a faint glow along its trailing edge. The witnesses felt they could see individual features on the ventral surface of the object, and they were certain that they were looking at a very large, solid object.

The object began moving slowly to the south, at which time it appeared to 'fire' a white beam of light at the ground. At about the same time, the seven lights on the object's leading edge suddenly dimmed and disappeared from the witnesses' sight. The object moved off in the general direction of Sky Harbor International Airport, a few miles to the south, where it was

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witnessed by two air traffic controllers in the airport tower, and reportedly by several pilots, both on the ground and on final approach from the east.

After this point in the sighting, the facts are somewhat less clear to investigators. It is known that at least one object continued generally to the south and southeast, passing over the communities of Scottsdale, Glendale, and Gilbert. One of the witnesses in Scottsdale, a former airline pilot with 13,700 hours of flight time, reported seeing the object execute a distinct turn as it approached his position on the ground. He noted that he witnessed many lights on the object as it approached him, but that the number of lights appeared to diminish as it got closer to overhead. Many other witnesses in those communities reported seeing the object pass overhead as it made its way toward the mountains to the south of Phoenix.

Other sightings occurred shortly afterward along Interstate 10 in the vicinity of Casa Grande. One family of five, who were driving from Tucson to Phoenix, reported that the object that passed over their station wagon was so large that they could see one 'wing tip' of the object out one side of their car, and the other 'wing tip' out the other side. They estimated they were driving toward Phoenix at approximately 80 miles per hour, and they remained underneath the object for between one and two minutes as it moved in the opposite direction. They emphasized how incredibly huge the object appeared to be as it blocked out the sky above their car.

Many witnessed, located throughout the Phoenix basin, allegedly continued to witness objects and peculiar clusters of lights for several hours following the initial sightings. One group of witnesses reported witnessing a large disc streak to the west over Phoenix at very high speed. Others reported peculiar orange 'fireballs,' which appeared to hover in the sky even hours after the initial sightings.

One of the more intriguing reports was submitted by a young man who claimed to be an airman in the Air Force, stationed at Luke Air Force Base,

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located to the west of Phoenix in Litchfield Park. He telephoned the National UFO Reporting Center at 3:20 a.m. on Friday, some eight hours after the sightings on the previous night, and reported that two USAF F-15's fighters had been 'scrambled' from Luke AFB, and had intercepted one of the objects. Although the presence of F-15's could never be confirmed, the airman provided detailed information which proved to be highly accurate, based on what investigators would reconstruct from witnesses over subsequent weeks and months. Two days after his first telephone call, the airman called to report that he had just been informed by his commander that he was being transferred to an assignment in Greenland. He has never been heard from again since that telephone call.[4]

I will note here that at least one civilian eyewitness, a trucker traveling on Interstate-10, later told a newspaper reporter he saw a military jet interceptor apparently being scrambled from Luke AFB to pursue the enormous intruder.

Davenport has also discussed the rash of excited calls to Luke that night, made by citizens reporting their sightings—a development later denied by an Air Force spokesman at the base. Regardless, after NUFORC received several calls on its sighting hotline, Davenport had called the base to inquire about the situation in Phoenix. The operator he spoke with told him that she couldn't answer his many questions because the switchboard was being swamped with calls about the UFO sightings. Davenport continues:

Most of the controversy that arose from the incident centers around a cluster of lights that was seen, and videotaped, to the south of Phoenix at between 9:30 and 10:00 p.m. on the same night as the sightings. In May 1997, the Public Affairs Office at Luke AFB announced that their personnel had investigated these lights, and had established that they were flares launched from A10 'Warthog' aircraft over the Gila Bend 'Barry M. Goldwater' Firing Range at approximately 10:00 p.m. Even the most implacable UFO skeptics admit, however, that irrespective of whether such flares had in fact been launched or not, they cannot serve as an explanation for the objects that had been witnessed by many individuals some 1-2 hours earlier.

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Another interesting aspect of the case is the virtual absence of coverage in the print media, save fora handful of articles in local newspapers. The Prescott Daily Courier carried an article on March 14, but the Phoenix newspapers, and the national wire services, provided no early coverage of the event, even though they had been apprised of it. It was not until mid-June, almost ten weeks later, that the national press took any interest in the incident with the appearance of a front-page article in USA Today on June 18, 1997.

Investigators may never be able to re-assemble all of the facts surrounding the events that took place over Arizona on the night of March 13, 1997. However, there is no doubt in the minds of most that what occurred was extraordinarily bizarre in nature, and that many thousands of witnesses can attest to the events.[5]

Davenport's detailed synopsis provides a sense of how dramatic and widespread the UFO sightings were that night. His investigation, and those conducted by other researchers, clearly demonstrate how feeble the "military flares" explanation offered by the Air Force really is. Even so, uninformed UFO skeptics and debunkers confidently continue to assert that there were only flares, not two mile-wide craft, in the Arizona skies that night.

Not So Long Ago

When I lecture on UFOs, I am often asked, "When and where was the most recent UFO sighting at a nuclear weapons site?" Given that these incidents are ongoing, it's entirely possible that such a sighting occurred at one missile facility or another very recently—perhaps even last night. However, as far as I know, the last *reported* incidents apparently took place near Conrad, Montana, in December 2006.

On December 12th, an individual—not identified—posted an intriguing sighting report on the National UFO Reporting Center website. The previous night, while driving home, the anonymous source had sighted a UFO just east of Conrad. Moreover, according to the post, he also had another sighting,

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four days earlier, at almost the same location. Although there was no mention of nuclear missiles in this report, I knew that the town of Conrad is literally surrounded by Minuteman missile sites. On a hunch, I contacted NUFORC's director, Peter Davenport, and requested the source's name and contact information. Davenport then contacted Ryan Riewer, now a student at the University of Montana, who agreed to speak with me.

In a telephone interview, Riewer told me, "I live on a farm nearly three miles east of Conrad. On December 7, 2006, I was driving home from work at around 10:30 at night. I was on Sollid Road, probably a mile away from our house, when I saw this light out of the corner of my eye, coming from the southwest. It was the fastest thing I've ever seen. It came racing up almost to the road. It stopped dead for a moment, then took off at a 90-degree angle to where it came from. It went southeast, over a hill on the horizon. A couple of seconds later, it came racing back toward me. Then it began to slow down and descended toward the ground at an angle. When it was about fifty feet up, the light shut off. lt looked like it landed about a half-mile, or maybe a mile, from our house. That was really, really weird."

I asked Riewer if there was a missile site in the area where the UFO apparently landed. He seem somewhat surprised by this question but confirmed that was indeed the case. "Yes, there is a missile silo out in that direction. I saw it one time when I was hunting with my dad," he said, "I would say that the distance between the missile site and where the object landed was about a mile."

Riewer continued, "Four days later, [on December 11th,] I was driving home after work again when I saw an extremely bright light in the sky, dead east, directly in front of me. As soon as I got home, I looked at the light with binoculars. By then, it was southeast of us. I saw blue lights on top, a red light on the bottom, and a white light in the middle that kept moving around. I couldn't make out the shape of the object, just the lights on it. My mom looked through the binoculars too. The object remained stationary for half an hour or so. I would estimate that it was two to three miles southeast of our house. Then the lights shut off and I could no longer see them. About five minutes later, I saw another bright light. It looked exactly the same as the other one. The second object was the about the same distance away, but dead south of us."

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Riewer concluded, “I put down the binoculars and called the sheriffs office. The person I spoke with just said, ‘Thanks for reporting this.' Hi acted like it was no big deal. There have been lots of reports of weird mill going on around Conrad. He had probably heard other reports like mine, so he wasn’t too excited about it. After I got off the phone, I looked at the object again. By then, it appeared as three red lights in a triangular pattern. After a few minutes, the bottom right light shut off. Then the bottom left light moved up to join the top light. All of this took place over a half an hour or so. Then these lights disappeared too. After a few moments. I noticed another object farther off in the distance, north of where I saw the first light. It was northeast of our house, but dimmer, and I couldn’t sec it too well. About a half an hour later, it was gone.”

After speaking with Riewer, I consulted my large, Air Force-issued map f Malmstrom’s Minuteman missile sites—given to me by a retired USAF missileman—and discovered that the Papa Launch Control Facility, P-0, is approximately 2 miles NNW of his family’s farm. (The Air Force now has a new name f°r Launch Control Facilities: Missile Alert Facilities.) I also found that the boundaries of three 564th Strategic Missile Squadron flights—Papa, Quebec, and Sierra—all converge nearby. According to the map, Launch Facility S-40 is approximately 2.5 miles SE of Riewer’s house, and Launch Facility Q-15 is approximately 5 miles NE of it. Riewer’s estimate that the object southeast of his house on December 11th was “2 to 3 miles” distant seems to place it in the general vicinity of S-40, while the dimmer object sighted northeast of his farm was conceivably near Q-15, although that is less certain.

I asked Riewer if he had heard or seen military jets either near the objects or in their vicinity during either sighting. He said that he had not. I then asked if he had noticed any unusual Air Force activity on the ground immediately after either sighting. He responded that he had not.

I asked Riewer if he had seen other unusual lights or objects in the sky on other occasions. He replied, “Yes, one night, maybe a year or so before my other sightings, my step-father and I heard what sounded like a helicopter flying really low. It was really loud. We went outside to see what was going on. We saw what looked like a helicopter, but really high up. That was puzzling because we expected it to be close to the ground. It was so high we

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could only see the lights on it. Then another helicopter came into view. The two met up and just stopped in the sky, really close to each other. Then the noise quit and both of them were silent! By then we figured they weren't helicopters. Then all of the lights slowly faded away, like they were going out. They just disappeared. Those two objects were southeast of the house, in the same general direction where I saw the other objects [on December 7th and 11th] and about the same distance away."

(When I mentioned this particular sighting to Riewer's neighbor, Erik Gustafson, he suggested that the suddenly silent "helicopters" may have seemingly gone quiet due to a shift in the direction of the wind, which carried their rotor noises away from Riewer and his step-father. Riewer doubts this theory and, based on his statements to me, so do I.)

Riewer continued, "I mentioned my sightings at school and got laughed at, but one my teachers backed me up and told us about his own UFO sighting, which happened while he was out hunting. After that some other students got brave and told us about their sightings. So rm not the only one around Conrad who has seen things."

In his posting on the NUFORC website, Riewer had mentioned that a mutilated cow bad been found on his grandparents farm at the end of October 2006. He told me, "My step-grandpa and grandma have a farm near us, five miles east of Conrad. About a month or so before my sightings, a neighboring rancher had his cows grazing on their land and one of them was found mutilated. Its genitals were missing and the skin on one side its face was peeled off. As far as I know, that was the last time that kind of thing was reported in the area, but cattle have been found that way [on other occasions] in the past."

After speaking with Riewer, I located an *Associated Press* article from November 12, 2006, regarding *another* mutilation in Pondera County around that time, south of the town of Valier. According to rancher John Peterson, a healthy young cow was found with all of the signs of a classic mutilation. However, according to the article, "A few feet south of the carcass there was an impression in the stubble field, like the cow had lain down there. But there were no footprints or drag marks between the impression and her final resting place. It was as if the bovine had fallen from the sky—and bounced."[6] No

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low-flying aircraft had been reported by Peterson or his neighbors.

Although at least one skeptical writer has already ridiculed this report of an air-dropped cow, the reader will recall I earlier mentioned my 1994 interview with a ranching couple near Great Falls, who told me that they had once found a mutilated cow dropped inside the 10-foot high security fence surrounding the Minuteman missile launch facility on their property. The couple said they had heard no helicopter noises of any kind the night before. That incident occurred in 1975, during the rash of UFO sightings at several ICBM sites outside Malmstrom AFB.

Further, Howard Burgess, one of the principle mutilation investigators in the 1970s, once told me of finding other animals with broken backs which had apparently been dropped from a great height. So, while the skeptics scoff and snicker about “bouncing cows”, the ranchers involved in these cases remain adamant that nothing so ordinary as predators or pranksters are responsible for the ongoing mystery.

In any case, in the 2006 incident mentioned above, the apparently air-dropped cow was discovered near the town of Valier, within Malmstrom' missile field, a few miles north of the Tango Flight Missile Alert Facility (the old Launch Control Facility). Five years earlier, another cow, owned by rancher Everett King, was similarly mutilated even closer to the Tango site. Meanwhile, in October 2006, the cow discovered on Riewer’s grandparents’ farm was found approximately two miles southeast of the Papa Launch Control Facility. So, as in years past, a link continues to exist between ICBM sites and a significant number of cattle mutilations. Ranchers and law enforcement personnel around the country who know of other such cases in recent years may contact me at the email address listed in Appendix A.

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26. The Agency

"It is time for the truth to be brought out in open Congressional hearings… Behind the scenes, high-ranking Air Force officers are soberly concerned about the UFOs, but through official secrecy and ridicule, many citizens are led to believe the unknown flying objects are nonsense. To hide the facts, the Air Force has silenced its personnel."

—Vice Admiral R. H. Hillenkoetter (Ret.)

Former Director, Central Intelligence Agency

The New York Times, February 28, 1960

Thank you, Admiral Hillenkoetter. Oh well, I guess we should be thankful that even one former CIA director chose to be truthful about UFOs after leaving the agency. But that was nearly 50 years ago, so don't hold your breath waiting for the next one. Unfortunately, Hillenkoetter later reversed himself—under pressure from the agency, according to respected UFO researcher Major Donald E. Keyhoe (USMC Ret.)—and withdrew his support for congressional hearings.

Fortunately, another former, high-level CIA employee, Victor Marchetti, has also been candid with the public. As noted in Chapter 8, Marchetti—whose best-selling book, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, exposed many of the agency's counterproductive and sometimes illegal activities—also wrote a lengthy article about the CIA's interest in UFOs, titled, "How the CIA Views the UFO Phenomenon", which appeared in the May 1979 issue of *Second Look* magazine. Marchetti said,

There are many myths, few facts, and much speculation about what the CIA knows of the UFO phenomenon. These, combined with the public's distrust of the clandestine agency, have led to a strong popular belief that the CIA is at the center of a government-wide conspiracy to cover-up the truth about UFOs. It usually follows that the cover-up is designed to keep us ignorant, or at least confused and doubtful, about contacts or visitations by intelligent

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beings from outer space. Thus, if we only knew what the CIA knows, and is covering up, we would be better able to understand and deal with aliens. And that would be a good thing.[1]

At first glance, it seems almost as if Marchetti is mildly chastising the public for its widely-held perceptions and occasional myth-making about the CIA's involvement with UFOs. However, he then finished his thought:

I do not know from my own firsthand experience if there are UFOs. I have never seen one. Nor have I seen conclusive, empirical, or physical evidence that they really exist. But, I do know that the CIA and U.S. Government have been concerned over the UFO phenomenon for many years and that their attempts, both past and recent, to discount the significance of the phenomenon and to explain away the apparent lack of official interest in it have all the ear-markings of a classic intelligence cover-up.[2]

Here Marchetti seems to suggest that at least some of the public's perceptions—as regards an official cover-up—may indeed have merit. And what might the CIA be hiding from the public? Well, that involves a fair amount of guesswork, however, elsewhere in the article, Marchetti writes about the rumors he had heard while working at the highest level of the agency, regarding "little gray men whose ships had crashed, or had been shot down."[3] While this statement cannot be taken as proof that the CIA has been involved in the recovery of downed UFOs, or even as evidence that such events have actually occurred—given that Marchetti refers to the reports he heard as "rumors"—it at least confirms that agency employees had discussed, in a serious manner in Marchetti's presence, the possibility that such recoveries had in fact occurred. But as researcher Mark Rodeghier correctly notes, "Rumors are just that, and a serious discussion of rumors is different than a serious discussion of actual documents or knowledge about crashed UFOs."

Over the years, the CIA has attempted to portray its own role in the U.S. government's UFO-related activities as a mostly passive one from the early 1950s onward. However, a number of researchers have doubted this

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carefully-crafted public image, believing it to be nothing more than a facade designed to conceal a much greater, perhaps central role in the official cover-up. Over time, certain hints, inadvertent slips, and the occasional rare admission by a former agency employee, like Marchetti, have coalesced in a way which suggests an official interest in UFOs far greater than the CIA is willing to acknowledge.

Researcher Barry Greenwood writes,

The possible involvement of the CIA in UFO research has long been a hot topic of controversy. Up until the mid-1970s, the CIA's response to inquiries about UFOs would be either not to answer or to forward the correspondence to the Air Force for attention. This was not very satisfying to individuals who had heard rumors [about], or had even experienced firsthand, [instances] of the CIA collecting and analyzing information on UFO sightings from around the world. There was little that could be done to gain more information. No legal means existed to force the CIA to answer any questions, let alone release documents.

When the Freedom of Information Act became law, this means was finally made available to UFO researchers. Initial attempts were not without frustration, however. One of the first organizations to pursue the CIA for UFO documents was Ground Saucer Watch (GSW) of Phoenix Arizona. Headed by William Spaulding, GSW was at the forefront of document research and made great strides in allowing public access to government UFO activities.

A request was filed on July 14, 1975, by GSW… The letter asked for copies of all UFO case investigations/evaluations by the CIA. After a long delay, the CIA responded on March 26, 1976:

'In order that you may be aware of the true facts concerning the involvement of the CIA in the investigation of UFO phenomena, let me give you the following brief history. Late in 1952, the National Security Council levied upon the CIA the requirement to determine if the existence of UFOs would

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create a danger to the national security of the United States. The Office of Scientific Intelligence established the Intelligence Advisory Committee [more commonly known as the Robertson Panel] to study the matter. That committee made the recommendations found at the bottom of page 1 and the top four lines of page 2 of the Robertson Panel Report. At no time prior to the formation of the Robertson Panel and subsequent to the issuance of the panel's report, has the CIA engaged in the study of the UFO phenomenon. The Robertson Panel Report is summation of the Agency's interest and involvement in the matter.'

This, then, was the CIA's only involvement [with] UFOs, according to the CIA. A much protracted legal battle ensued and resulted in the ultimate release of nearly 900 pages of UFO-related documents...[4]

In other words, after telling Ground Saucer Watch that it had no UFO files involving its *study* of the phenomenon, except for the previously declassified Robertson Panel Report, the CIA—once it had been subjected to legal pressure in federal district court—managed to find some 900 documents in its files, which it eventually released to GSW. [Researcher Jan Aldrich notes that previous to the GSW lawsuit, the CIA had released a number of UFO documents in its Declassification Index. Some of those documents were used in the lawsuit to ask the agency about other documents referenced in them.]

Perhaps not surprisingly, at least not to me, a review of these items leaves one with the impression that, generally, the subject of UFOs was not one the CIA actively pursued, relative to its other intelligence-gathering and analytical activities. And this is precisely the impression the agency wished to convey. The documents included various internal memoranda, a few reports, some low-level files from friendly foreign intelligence services, and even newspaper clippings of UFO sightings overseas. In short, the picture portrayed by this rather paltry collection is that—from it' creation in 1947, up to the late 1970s—the agency's interest in the UFO phenomenon was, with rare exceptions, both peripheral and superficial

That said, there were among the files a small number of menu mentioned in Chapter Two, in which the Assistant Director of the CIA's Office of

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Scientific Intelligence, Dr. H. Marshall Chadwell, expressed concern about repeated UFO incursions into restricted airspace above various nuclear weapons-related facilities in the early 1950s.

However, on the whole, the released documents suggested that while the CIA had a moderate interest in the U.S. Air Forces investigation of UFOs, they also seemed to rule out the agency's involvement in any UFO investigations of its own. Nor was there any evidence to indicate that it had participated in formulating or directing, government policies related co the suppression of UFO-related information—i.e. a cover-up.

But this self-portrait of CIA non-involvement with UFOs is highly misleading. As I wrote earlier in this book, "The *selective* declassification of UFO-related information by the U.S. government has been routinely utilized for decades to steer public perception in a certain direction. It's commonly called 'spin.' The purpose of this propaganda tactic is to change the actual story of official interest in the UFO phenomenon, so that it appears as if there exists only minimal concern, or none at all."

In this particular instance, all of the documents grudgingly released by the CIA—after the agency initially denied their very existence—were classified SECRET or lower. Not a single TOP SECRET or above UFO-related document held by the CIA was declassified. "Or above" simply means any file designated TOP SECRET/code word, thereby restricting access to it by those CIA employees who hold not only a Top Secret clearance, but who also have a need-to-know about the project or operation with that specific code name.

One of those directly involved in the effort to access the CIA's UFO documents, W. Todd Zechel, says that in the course of the legal action against the agency, Ground Saucer Watch's attorney, Peter Gersten, had been informed by the CIA's attorneys that some 10,000 pages of UFO-related documents been located. Although only an estimate, this number was nevertheless much higher—by a factor of ten—than the 1000 or so pages ultimately released to GSW. In an article written years later, Zechel described the unsatisfying outcome. Referring to himself in the third-person, he writes,

W. Todd Zechel, [is the] founder of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS)

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and [a] UFO researcher specializing in government cover-up. Zechel had initiated a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the CIA in September 1977, in conjunction with Peter Gersten, a New York attorney, and Ground Saucer Watch, a Phoenix-based UFO group for which Zechel was Director of Research. In December 1978 the suit resulted in the CIA releasing more than a thousand documents it had claimed didn't exist prior to the suit…

The CIA had been ordered to search all of its files for UFO-related documents and make a full accounting of them. This Stipulation and Order was in accordance with an agreement Zechel and Gersten had worked out with the CIA's attorney and a U.S. Attorney at a Status Call hearing on the suit on July 7, 1978. It was then that Zechel had, in a rather forceful manner, threatened to have CIA officials criminally prosecuted for issuing false replies to FOIA requests on UFOs. Faced with this, the CIA had backed down and agreed to cooperate. However, subsequently the CIA only accounted for 1,000 documents and claimed to be withholding a mere 57…

Statements made by CIA representatives during the course of the suit, during which attorney Gersten was led to believe in excess of 10,000 documents would be made available. There was also a letter to Zechel from the CIA's FOIA staff asking him to suspend action on a particular request, stating, '1,000 pages of additional UFO related documents have just been located' and were being processed.

It was also clear from analyzing the documents released on December 15, 1978, that the CIA was continuing to be deceptive. Brad Sparks, a researcher with CAUS, found references in the released material to more than 200 other UFO-related documents which the CIA had failed to acknowledge. Moreover, it was evident the CIA had carefully selected the documents it released, even with heavy censorship. The CIA only accounted for documents related to matters Zechel and Sparks had uncovered during their investigation of CIA involvement, and excluded many others such as conclusions of its emergency studies of UFOs in 1952, 1957, 1965, 1967, and others. These studies were carried out in secret, utilizing Domestic Contact Service (a.k.a. Domestic

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Collection Division) agents, during a number of UFO flaps and in conjunction with the Condon Committee study (1966-68).

A Missed Opportunity

In March 1979, after the CIA filed deceptive affidavits with the court about its purported search of files, Gersten set out to file an Order to Show Cause Why the CIA Should Not Be Held in Contempt of Court. The Show Cause order asked the court to penalize the CIA for failing to comply with the Stipulation and Order agreed to in 1978…

Zechel had [learned in the course of conversations with former agency employees] the CIA had been conducting secret studies of UFOs since 1952, and perhaps even before that, and had utilized high-tech cameras, sensing devices and a nationwide field staff of agents who became covert operatives in 1973…

The Order to Show Cause was filed one day late and thrown out of court when the U.S. District Court judge upheld the CIA's Out of Time motion. The CIA had been 88 days late with its filing, surpassing a 60 day extension by 28 days. But that mattered not to Judge John Pratt, whose rulings had been reversed five times in the past by higher courts for decisions unfairly favorable to the CIA...[5]

So there the matter rested. Due to a legal technicality, there would be no appeal of the CIA's very limited and apparently highly-selective release of UFO-related files. The first verifiable confirmation that the CIA did indeed have Top Secret or above UFO documents occurred in the early 1980s, after a subsequent legal action against the National Security Agency (NSA), by the group founded but no longer headed by Zechel, Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, revealed that the CIA had sent the NSA 23 UFO-related files over the years, some of them classified TOP SECRET/code word. In the mid-1980s, researcher Stanton Friedman used the FOIA to access four of them.

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He writes, “It took me two years to get nine of [the “3 documents],..They were unclassified English translations of Eastern European newspaper articles about UFOs. It took another three years in response to my appeal to get four more, [which were] very heavily censored CIA TOP SECRET code word UFO documents. On two, one could read only eight words that weren’t blacked out. One said ‘DENY in TOTO!’”[6]

In short, at the present time, there are, for all practical purposes, no CIA Top Secret or above UFO-related documents in the public domain Moreover, there is no real assurance that the CIA actually released all of its SECRET or lesser-classified UFO documents in response to the GSW lawsuit. After all, the CIA initially denied—that is, lied to—GSW’s attorney when it told him that the agency had *no more* UFO documents. Only when legal action was threatened did the CIA finally release a relatively small number of files (after its attorneys admitted that the agency had a much larger number) most of which were thoroughly innocuous. Even then, the agency continued to hide that fact that it had sent a number of TOP SECRET-code word UFO documents to the NSA. That fact was not uncovered until years later, and only after another lawsuit. And even then, when copies of those documents were finally released to Stanton Friedman, they were censored to the point of uselessness.

Regarding the probable futility of another lawsuit against the CIA, UFO researcher Bruce Maccabee has written, “Both the CIA and later NSA lawsuits showed that the government could appeal to ‘national security’ to withhold documents. There was no reason to believe that the same excuses wouldn’t be used again to protect the ‘really good stuff we wanted. In other words, [the CIA] might locate some more, even many more, documents and simply refuse to release them all or in part for national security reasons...”[7]

Regardless, in view of the agency’s documented track record cl denial and obfuscation, should we the public really believe any official CIA pronouncement about its supposedly superficial and intermittent involvement with UFOs?

This question gets right to the heart of the matter, as regards the nukes-related UFO incidents. In light of the extensive testimony provided by my ex-Air Force sources—regarding UFOs disrupting nuclear missiles or, worse,

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temporarily activating them—it seems a virtual certainty that the CIA would have been informed of these incidents, given their obvious and immediate impact on the national security of the United States.

If this contention has merit, and in my view it does, the classification of such information would had to have been very high, at least Secret and possibly higher, given its extraordinary sensitivity. I already know that after the Malmstrom AFB missile shutdown incidents in March 1967, the Air Force launch officers involved were debriefed and told that the incidents were classified SECRET. And that was just the initial classification level assigned to the shutdowns. It's not out of the question that once the debriefing data was evaluated by higher-ups at SAC or the Pentagon, an even higher rating was assigned to the incidents. This last scenario, while admittedly speculative, is neither unreasonable nor unprecedented.

Some will dispute my contention that the Air Force would have provided the CIA with information about UFO activity at nuclear weapons sites in the first place, either because it was strictly a military matter, or because of the now well-documented inter-governmental rivalries that existed during the Cold War era, which precluded the sharing of vital information on many occasions—often at the country's expense. (For example the notorious CIA-FBI rivalry during J. Edgar Hoover's long tenure at the bureau and, more recently, when the two intelligence groups failed to share important information about the Islamic terrorists involved in 9/11, before the attacks occurred.)

However, considering the many nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents presented in this book—which clearly have national security implications in the most naked, fundamental manner—for one to argue that the CIA would have no documents relating to such events is to suggest one of two things:

1) *Either* the U.S. military successfully kept this monumentally-important information from the primary agency tasked with collating national security intelligence during the entire Cold War era.

2) *Or* the CIA—upon being informed about the apparent disruption and temporary activation of our nuclear missiles by those piloting the UFOs—

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simply shrugged and said, “That’s the military’s problem,” and thereafter circulated no Secret or Top Secret memos about those incidents, and wrote no Secret or Top Secret reports about them to be delivered to, for example, the President during his daily, highly-classified intelligence briefing prepared by the agency’s Directorate of Intelligence.

While some might be able to accept one of these scenarios as credible I simply can not. Therefore, in my view, it is almost a given that Secret and/or Top Secret documents relating to UFO activity at nuclear weapons sites continue to be held by the CIA. Needless to say, if such documents do indeed exist, they will not be available for public scrutiny anytime soon.

In the interim, American citizens, and the rest of humanity, are left only with the tantalizing statements by two credible sources regarding the CIA’s direct involvement in at least one nuclear weapons-related UFO incident. As noted in an earlier chapter, former Air Force officers. Dr. Bob Jacobs and Dr. Florenze Mansmann, both adamantly insist that CIA agents confiscated an astounding motion picture film showing a UFO shooting down a dummy nuclear warhead with beams of light, during a missile test in September 1964 —the so-called Big Sur Incident.

Nothing in the 1000 or so documents released by the CIA in the late 1970s would indicate the agency’s involvement with, or even knowledge of, that extraordinary case. Nevertheless, the two officers at Vandenberg AFB who were directly involved unequivocally stand by their accounts of CIA intervention. According to then Major Mansmann, there was absolutely no doubt about who was in control, calling the shots, and impressing upon everyone present the importance of absolute secrecy. Mansmann has written that the incident was classified Top Secret. Therefore, presumably, the CIA has to have at least one Top Secret UFO case document, and accompanying motion picture film, in its files. Efforts by researchers over the years to access the film have met with blanket denials from the agency about its existence.

The important point here is that if the CIA’s *official* stance is factual—regarding its supposedly passive, or even non-role in the ongoing collection and simultaneous suppression of UFO data—then it should not have been interested in the Big Sur incident at all, deferring instead to the Air Force. But

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the former Air Force officers directly involved in the case continue to say otherwise. For example, in the early 1980s, Mansmann—after confirming in writing, on numerous occasions, former Lieutenant Jacobs' published account of the UFO incident—also expressed concern about possible repercussions to himself from "the agency involved" in the confiscation of the film, because of his willingness to substantiate Jacobs story.

(When considering the CIA's supposedly limited role in the UK1 cover-up, one might also consider the statements of retired high-level FAA official John Callahan, who unequivocally states that a CIA agent confiscated radar tapes and voice communications data relating to the sighting of a huge UFO in Alaska, in 1987, and angrily ordered that the incident be kept secret to prevent public panic.)

In any case, the ongoing controversy among researchers, regarding the degree to which the CIA has been involved in monitoring—and perhaps even coordinating the governments covert response to UFOs—is unlikely to be resolved in the near future.

In 1994, the CIA authorized the publication of an official history of its involvement with UFOs, condensed into a 17-page article by the CIA's own historian, Gerald K. Haines. The predictable piece appeared in *Studies in Intelligence*, a classified journal accessible to members of the intelligence community. Titled, "CIA's Role in the Study of UFOs, 194790," it appeared in the unclassified edition of the journal in 1997.

If Haines was not ordered to be intentionally disingenuous, it seems evident he was largely kept in the dark by his superiors at the agency, and was given a highly selective cross-section of files from which to construct his "history." If the Haines article was not intended as an exercise in spin, it had the same effect, if one reviews the generally uncritical, uninformed, naive, almost slavish acceptance by the U.S. media of Haines' summation as something resembling reliable history.

The sanitized version of history offered by the CIA's in-house historian is a combination of old news—publicized long ago, at least within ufological circles—and patently ridiculous claims (e.g. CIA officials who worked on the U-2 and SR-71 spy plane projects claimed that over half of all UFO reports from the late 1950s through the 1960s were the result of manned

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reconnaissance flights over the United States.)

Noted Ufologist Mark Rodeghier's excellent critique of Haines' article is available online.[8] Rodeghier is the Scientific Director for the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) and, while I disagree with some of his assessments, he neatly dissects Haines' own naivete, personal unfamiliarity with the UFO phenomenon, and probably predictable, face-value acceptance of the materials he was provided with by agency higher-ups to review. Needless 10 say, no Top Secret or above UFO-related documents were handed to Haines to include in his "history." Rodeghier writes,

When the press learned about the Haines study, the attention was dramatic...The media generally focused on two aspects of the Haines article. In a brief section entitled 'CIA's U-2 and OXCART as UFOs,' Haines claims that many UFO sightings in the late 1950s and 1960s were actually misidentified secret American spy planes. Moreover, he alleges that the Air Force's Project Blue Book was in on this cover-up, purposely misled the public, and falsified (Haines didn't use that word but that is plainly what the Air Force would be doing) UFO explanations. This is important news if true, and the media rightly played up this angle… Note that the CIA is not accused of deception by Haines; rather, it is the Air Force that willingly concocted the bogus explanations…

Press coverage focused on the [CIA's Robertson Panel's] recommendations that UFO reports be debunked (a policy Blue Book followed assiduously after 1953), that UFO groups be watched, and that there was a danger the Soviets might use UFOs to clog the channels of communication and then launch a nuclear attack. The deception about our spy planes was just a small part of this strategy.[9]

Not surprisingly, there is no mention in Haines' CIA-authorized history of nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents, or any of the "very sensitive activities" involving UFOs alluded to by disaffected CIA official Victor Marchetti—in his far-more-cogent, if way-too-brief, 1979 article on the agency's actual, ongoing, deadly-serious interest regarding UFOs.

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Even if Marchetti had not resigned from the CIA in 1969, the agency would never have asked him to write a history of its involvement with UFOs. Unlike Gerald Haines, he would have undoubtedly asked too many questions regarding the highly-selective, very limited data he was given to peruse. (I can imagine old Victor asking, "So, guys, where are all of the Top Secret UFO documents?") That said, perhaps Haines can he forgiven for the often misleading article he wrote. After all, he was never privy to the hushed discussions about UFOs that took place at the highest levels of the CIA, as later publicly discussed by Marchetti.

Speaking of official history vs. actual history, another notable article by Marchetti, titled, "Propaganda and Disinformation: How the CIA Manufactures History", was published by the Journal of Historical Review, in 2001. He writes,

The CIA is a master at distorting history—even creating its own version of history to suit its institutional and operational purposes...The real reason for the official secrecy, in most instances, is not to keep the opposition (the CIA's euphemistic term for the enemy) from knowing what is going on; [because] the enemy usually does know. The basic reason for governmental secrecy is to keep you, the American public, from knowing—for you, too, are considered the opposition, or enemy—so that you cannot interfere. When the public does not know what the government or the CIA is doing, it cannot voice its approval or disapproval of their actions. In fact, they can even lie to you about what they are doing or have done, and you will not know it…

The CIA, functioning as a secret instrument of the U.S. government and the presidency, has long misused and abused history and continues to do so. I first became concerned about this historical distortion in 1957, when I was a young officer in the Clandestine Services of the CIA.

One night, after work, I was walking down Constitution Avenue with a fellow officer, who previously had been a reporter for United Press.

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'How are they ever going to know,' he asked.

'Who? How is who ever going to know what?' I asked.

'How are the American people ever going to know what the truth is? How are they going to know what the truth is about what we are doing and have done over the years?' he said. 'We operate in secrecy, we deal in deception and disinformation, and then we burn our files. How will the historians ever be able to learn the complete truth about what we've done in these various operations, these operations that have had such a major impact on so many important events in history?'

I couldn't answer him then. And I can't answer him now. I don't know how the American people will ever really know the truth about the many things that the CIA has been involved in. Or how they will ever know the truth about the great historical events of our times. The government is continually writing and rewriting history—often with the CIA's help—to suit its own purposes…

If the public were aware of what the CIA is doing, it might say: 'We don't like what you're doing—stop it!,' or 'You're not doing a good job—stop it!' The public might ask for an accounting for the money being spent and the risks being taken.

Thus secrecy is absolutely vital to the CIA. Secrecy covers not only operations in progress, but continues after the operations, particularly if the operations have been botched. Then they have to be covered up with more lies, which the public, of course, can't recognize as lies, allowing the CIA to tell the public whatever it wishes.

Presidents love this. Every president, no matter what he has said before getting into office, has been delighted to learn that the CIA is his own private

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tool. The presidents have leapt at the opportunity to keep Congress and the public in the dark about their employment of the agency.

This is what was at the basis of my book, The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence. I had come to the conclusion, as a member of the CIA, that many of our policies and practices were not in the best interests of the United States, but were in fact counterproductive, and that if the American people were aware of this they would not tolerate it...[10]

Marchetti was obviously ahead of the curve in exposing CIA abuses and follies, as the public now knows. Over the last few decades, other former intelligence agency employees and government officials have come forward to decry the agency's questionable policies and practices which clearly deserve public scrutiny and greater congressional oversight. While no ex-CIA official has yet elaborated—at least candidly and at length—on Marchetti's intriguing comments regarding the agency's involvement with UFOs, other persons with CIA contacts have.

W. Todd Zechel, perhaps the person most responsible for the release of the relatively few CIA UFO documents currently available, died in 2006. In one of his last published articles, he summarized his 30-year investigation of the agency's involvement with the UFO phenomenon.

Zechel's history, although unofficial and incomplete, is almost certainly closer to the truth than anything offered by the agency itself. He wrote in part,

Although the United States Air Force (USAF) has been a great deal less than candid and forthright about UFOs over the years, especially in view of the fact the Air Force is charged with defending the country's air space, it appears that it was the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which orchestrated a policy of deception in order to prevent the American people from learning the truth about UFOs.

A formerly SECRET report (the so-called Robertson Panel Report) released

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under the Freedom of Information Act shows that CIA officials and consultants thought people seeing and reporting UFOs was more dangerous than UFOs themselves, stating, 'the continued emphasis on the reporting of these phenomena (UFOs) does, in these perilous times, result in a threat to the orderly functioning of the protective organs of the body politic.'

Another 'danger' cited by the CIA panel was that acknowledging UFOs could result in...the cultivation of a morbid national psychology in which hostile propaganda could induce hysterical behavior and a harmful distrust of duly constituted authority.' To counter these supposed dangers, the CIA panel recommended a policy of 'debunking' and education designed to persuade people that what they were seeing really wasn't there.

In explaining how this psychological warfare against the American people should be carried out, the report stated: 'The debunking aim would result in reduction of public interest in 'flying saucers' which today evokes a strong psychological reaction. This education could be accomplished by mass media such as television, motion pictures and popular articles.'

The panel had further ideas on how what was essentially a disinformation program should be mounted, stating: 'It was felt strongly that psychologists familiar with mass psychology should advise on the nature and extent of the program.' The report went on to name certain psychologists who might be recruited to join the debunking project.

The formation of the CIA panel came about as a sort of compromise worked out by the National Security Council (NSC) after events in the summer of 1952. A major UFO flap had taken place across the country, highlighted by puzzling incidents in July 1952, when UFO intruders were simultaneously tracked on ground radar and observed by jet interceptor pilots over the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. The public, the press, and even President Harry Truman demanded to know what was going on. As a result, the US Air Force held a major press conference on July 29, 1952, the largest press

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conference since WW 11, at which it was suggested the UFOs were temperature inversions—layers of warm air trapped under cold air that, by some giant stretch of the Air Force's imagination, were tracked on radar and seen as maneuvering flying craft by pilots sent aloft on scramble alert.

In August 1952, as documents released as the result of the FOIA suit filed by the author confirm, the CIA began reviewing the Air Force's handling of UFOs. Ransom Eng, an official with the CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence, wrote a report in which he characterized the Air Force's efforts as 'scientifically invalid.' Armed with these criticisms, the CIA wanted to take charge of UFO intelligence (the collection and analysis of UFO evidence), and proposed, through CIA Director Walter Bedell Smith, that UFOs were much too serious of a matter to be left in the hands of the USAF. The National Security Council, however, would only approve a compromise whereby a CIA-appointed panel would review UFO reports provided by the Air Force to determine if UFOs were a 'direct, hostile threat to national security.'

… In January 1953 the CIA's Robertson Panel—mostly consulting scientists of the CIA's chosen to review the UFO evidence selected by the USAF—rejected the conclusions of the U.S. government's top photo analysts from the Naval Photographic Interpretation Center (NAVPIC), at Anacostia, Maryland, Capt. Arthur Lundahl and Lt. Robert Neasham, who had concluded the objects in two 8mm UFO films submitted to the Air Force and examined by the CIA Panel were extraterrestrial spacecraft. Both men were reportedly emotionally shattered by the Panel's rejection of their studied conclusions.

But within a matter of days, Lundahl and Neasham were invited by the CIA to resign their Navy officers' commissions and come over to the CIA as civilians and establish the CIA's National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) at 5th and K Streets in Washington, D.C., with Lundahl serving as the founding Director for the next twenty years and Neasham as his top assistant…

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The mastermind of what was to become the U.S. government's UFO policy and author of the CIA's Robertson Panel Report, which found that UFOs did not pose 'a direct, hostile threat to National Security,' was Fred Durant, an officer with the CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) who at the time was operating under the cover of being a civilian scientist employed by the Arthur Little Co. In fact, in August 1952, Durant, claiming to represent a small group of 'concerned scientists' (actually CIA officers) had approached USAF Captain Ed Ruppelt, Commanding Officer of the Air Force's UFO 'study,' Project Blue Book, and USAF Major Dewey Fournet, the Pentagon's liaison to Blue Book. Most revealingly, the CIA had found it necessary to spy on the Air Force in order to find out what it had collected on UFOs, and Fred Durant had been the perfect man for the secret mission...

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The CIA Takes Control

The U.S. Air Force (USAF) began collecting UFO data in mid-1947, shortly after the first civilian sightings of 'flying saucers' were reported. The initial study was code-named Project Sign. This was changed to Project Grudge in 1948. In December 1949 the Air Force issued a 'Grudge' report in an attempt to have saucer sightings dismissed as post-war or Cold War jitters, then closed down the official study program. However, in early 1951, the Commanding General of Air Force Intelligence at the Pentagon, Gen. Charles P. Cabell, secretly requested UFO studies to be reopened, and in 1952 the revitalized UFO study was assigned the code-name Project Blue Book. [Its formal name was] the Aerial Phenomena Group of the Air Technical Intelligence Center (AT1C) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. Air Force Intelligence at the Pentagon designated a senior officer to be liaison to Project Blue Book.

After the fiasco of July 1952, in which the USAF 'suggested' at a major press conference that the multiple UFO chases involving jet interceptors after the UFOs were tracked on ground radar were just 'temperature inversions' and the shameful American newspapers ran screaming headlines that (uncritically) proclaimed 'AIR FORCE DEBUNKS UFOS AS JUST NATURAL PHENOMENA,' the CIA tried to grab control over UFO intelligence away from what it perceived as an irresponsible USAF. But the National Security Council wasn't willing to embarrass the Air Force by taking away [its authority to investigate] the UFO problem.

The next big UFO flap started in early November 1957, when landed UFOs as large as 200 feet in diameter were observed near Levelland, Texas, by credible witnesses, including law enforcement officers. After a quick visit, an Air Force Intelligence officer [sic] dismissed the incidents as resulting from 'ball lightning.' This absurd explanation angered the local Texas residents and witnesses, many of whom held responsible positions in local government. Powerful U.S. Senator Lyndon Johnson (D-Tex), then Chairman of the Senate

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Armed Services Committee, was contacted by the outraged Texas citizens from Levelland, and he asked the CIA to conduct a secret investigation, since it was clear the USAF was dropping the ball and just trying to protect its own ass. At one point, in November 1957, CIA Director Allen Dulles phoned Dr. Knox Milsap, then the Chief Scientist at White Sands Missile Range, in New Mexico, at 4 A.M. (local time), to request an investigation of a reported (to the CIA) UFO landing in the nearby Organ Mountains. According to Dulles, a civilian had reportedly snapped photos of the landed UFO and the CIA had an urgent need to obtain the photos for its emergency study.

As part of the November 1957 emergency UFO study, the CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) 'levied a requirement' (sent out an order) to the CIA's Domestic Contact Service (DCS), which had offices in 35 to 40 larger cities across America. The Domestic Contact Service was part of the CIA's Intelligence Directorate (DDI), and agents would normally show CIA IDs and say they were collecting intelligence for the CIA. (As opposed to the CIA's Directorate of Plans—DDP—which was the clandestine or covert branch and utilized 'backstopped' covers provided by the Central Cover Staff.)

After its emergency study, CIA officials once again came to the conclusion the Air Force was arbitrarily and capriciously explaining away UFO reports that might have important scientific or intelligence value. With Senator Lyndon Johnson's support, the CIA again proposed to the National Security Council that it be given control of UFO studies.

This time the NSC secretly concurred, reportedly issuing an intelligence directive (NSCID) in early 1958, granting control of all scientific intelligence —which included the collection and analysis of UFO data—to the Central Intelligence Agency. The USAF was in turn relegated to the control of technical Intelligence, such as the collection and analysis of data pertaining to aircraft advances by the Soviet Union.

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Although the Air Force continued to operate Project Blue Book until it was disbanded in 1969, Blue Book was not in the loop for classified intelligence reports on UFOs that were originated under JANAP 146E or CIRVIS reporting instructions for American defense forces, whereas the CIA was a primary recipient of such messages and reports...[11]

In other words, according to Todd Zechel, the CIA has been running the show since 1958, at least as far as the collection and analysis of scientific intelligence on UFOs.

[Researcher Jan Aldrich disputes Zechel's unequivocal statement regarding Blue Book being out of the loop for intelligence reports originated under JANAP 146E or CIRVIS, saying, "Project Blue Book did receive a large number CIRVIS and MERINT reports. Maybe they didn't receive all such reports, but Blue Book and the 4602d AISS have such reports in their files."[12] CIRVIS reports dealt with airborne UFO sightings by military pilots; MERINT reports related to sightings by U.S. Naval personnel.]

Zechel's three decades of research into the agency's covert, UFO related activities were often augmented by information gleaned from former agency insiders with whom he had developed something vaguely resembling personal relationships. During several visits with him in the 1980s, he provided me with a great many details—far more than I can present here—relating to various conversations he had with those persons.

To be entirely candid, Zechel audiotape recorded most of those discussions without the other person's knowledge. His view was that the importance of the information he was gathering outweighed the legal and moral questions surrounding the surreptitious recording of other persons without their prior consent. I am in no way defending or justifying Todd's actions here; I am simply stating facts.

Todd Zechel was a complex and often divisive character. As anyone who ever spent much time with him can confirm, Todd had a sharp analytical mind and near-photographic recall. He was also deeply dedicated to the proposition that the American people had the right to know the facts about UFOs—as evidenced by his dogged efforts during the ground-breaking but ultimately frustrating lawsuit against the CIA. It was that sense of mission,

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more than any other quality, which earned my respect.

That said, Todd was often his own worst enemy. He could be insufferably egomaniacal and unfairly critical of other researchers with whom he disagreed on one point or another. He also took advantage of many a colleagues generosity and abused friendships up to, and beyond, the breaking point—as several persons in ufology will attest. Moreover, on more than one occasion, Zechel publicly but anonymously tongue-lashed various leading ufologists—for example, Bruce Maccabee—whose many contributions to the field were a matter of record. As these misguided attacks and other unsavory activities mounted up over time, Todd eventually became a pariah in research circles.

For these reasons and others, Zechel remains a controversial figure, even after his death. Nevertheless, his investigations into the extent of the CIA's actual involvement with UFOs are considered to be without peer by many researchers, including myself. While he was never able to mount a follow-up lawsuit against the agency—in an effort to force the release of the CIA's Top Secret UFO documents—Todd's initial work in the late 1970s (together with researcher Brad Sparks and attorney Peter Gersten) was a milestone of sorts, and remains a testament to one American citizen's attempt to learn what his government was hiding from the public on this monumentally important subject.

In my view, Zechel's research convincingly paints a picture of CIA involvement in the collection and analysis of UFO data which is clearly at odds with the official portrait offered by the agency itself. While the CIA's carefully-reinforced public image is one of occasional agency concern over certain UFO sighting reports—all of them occurring long ago, of course—and involvement in a few low-level studies, Zechel's work has revealed a much broader and far more authoritative CIA role in the official U.S. government cover-up of UFOs.

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27. Roswell

Roswell. This one word, with no further elaboration or explanation, is instantly recognizable to millions of people around the world. In some, it invokes images of profound mystery and unprecedented secrecy; in others, only deep disdain for the naivete of UFO "believers", coupled with the certainty that "rational" explanations can explain the startling reports and revelations which have emerged over the years.

Of course, these contradictory perceptions almost completely derive from the host of claims and counter-claims which have created them. The known facts—frequently hyped by Hollywood, sometimes inflated by proponents, and almost always prematurely dismissed by skeptics—are nevertheless fascinating and have the potential, in my view, to shift the current paradigm.

The Roswell Incident—the alleged recovery of an alien spacecraft and the bodies of its crew—is without question the most famous and probably the most controversial UFO case of all time. If it actually happened, the recovery provided irrefutable proof of extraterrestrial visitation—at least for those few who had the physical evidence in their possession and, later on, the equally-select group of people who officially or unofficially learned of its existence. As for the rest of us, well, it's a waiting game. If and when an official announcement is made regarding the extraterrestrial nature of the recovered object, then the issue will be settled. Until that day, the controversy—exemplified by continuing academic debate as well as the unhelpful and usually uninformed diatribes found on the Internet—will endure.

I am not a Roswell researcher per se, and claim no expertise on the subject. Nevertheless, as other investigators have already noted, there is an intriguing nuclear weapons-connection with the alleged events occurring near Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947.

At the time, Roswell Army Air Field was the worlds only atomic bomber base, home to the 509th Bombardment Group, which had destroyed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki only two years earlier, in August 1945. By the summer of 1947, the elite squadron was routinely engaged in war games designed to prepare it for future atomic conflict, and had already participated

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in the two very real atomic bomb tests conducted in the Marshall Islands, during Operation Crossroads, in July 1946.

Considering the great many nuclear weapons-related UFO incidents which have come to light—as presented in various declassified documents, and the eyewitness testimony found in this book and elsewhere—the atomic bombardment squadron aspect of the Roswell story is perhaps not that surprising.

Moreover, there exists a second atomic weapons link with the incident, as *The New York Times* noted on July 9, 1947, when it reported the army's revised official line on the supposed recovery of a flying saucer. The headline read: "'Disk' Near Bomb Test Site Is Just a Weather Balloon." The bomb test cited was of course the first atomic bomb, secretly detonated at the "Trinity" site, northwest of the town of Alamogordo.

Not that the Roswell Incident had any *direct* relationship with the test of the world's first atomic bomb—exploded two years earlier, on July 16, 1945—but Trinity's relative proximity to the supposed recovery site of a crashed flying disk was obviously considered a noteworthy fact by the typically understated *Times*.

(Improbably, the famous "Roswell" debris field was located almost exactly halfway between the Trinity site and Roswell Army Airfield. The debris was actually found north of the town of Capitan, or some 60 miles WNW of Roswell. However, it has been alleged—by authoritative sources who I will introduce shortly—that the debris field merely marked a "skip site" where the doomed UFO scraped along the ground before briefly becoming airborne again. These persons—both researchers and former military men—contend that the main body of the craft finally fell to earth many miles to the east, at a site almost due north of Roswell.)

In any case, the first A-bomb test, and the subsequent basing of the first atomic bomber squadron at Roswell, were only part of the picture. As noted in Chapter 2, New Mexico in 1947 was home to ongoing atomic weapons development—conducted at a feverish pace at the Los Alamos and Sandia Laboratories—as well as military rocket testing and advanced radar research. In fact, no other place on Earth at that time hosted such a concentration of projects designed to advance the technology' of warfare. If an extraterrestrial

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race had indeed been monitoring our planet and was interested in, or concerned by, the exponential progress being made in potentially self-destructive human activities—which might, at some point, also pose a threat to their own kind—then aerial surveillance of New Mexico would have afforded a direct window on those activities.

So, assuming that such a momentous event actually occurred, what is the best available evidence for a recovered alien spacecraft at Roswell? Ask ten people this question and you'll probably get ten different answers. Obviously, virtually all of the available evidence is anecdotal because, if true, the alien spaceship story is predicated on the existence of a very successful, official cover-up of the physical evidence. The reason I say that "virtually" all of the evidence is testimonial in nature is because there may actually be one or two examples of physical evidence for the alleged recovery operation still available for scientific scrutiny. More on that shortly.

A great many books have been written about the Roswell controversy, pro and con, and the story has taken many twists and turns since it first came to the public's attention 60 years ago. Advocates for the validity of the recovered spacecraft scenario have enjoyed genuine successes, including securing the informed testimony of credible witnesses and by uncovering suspicious gaps in the government's records relating to the handling of the event.

But some of the same pro-UFO advocates have also routed purported breakthroughs in the case which were ultimately discredited. Consequently, the eventual disavowal of previously-endorsed "eyewitnesses", including Frank Kaufmann, Gerald Anderson and Philip Corso, all of whom turned out to be bogus, have taken their toll on the overall credibility of the Roswell saga.

Another ongoing distraction involves the surreptitious release of the almost certainly fraudulent "MJ-12" documents—supposedly written for high government officials in response to the recovery of an alien craft near Roswell—which first surfaced in the early 1980s. Unfortunately, these now-discredited "documents" have enjoyed unqualified acceptance in some quarters, despite research which has established the presence of numerous factual inaccuracies in them, as well as evidence of outright forgery in some

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instances.

In my view, the bogus files were part of a disinformation campaign, orchestrated by some military or civilian intelligence group, designed to create confusion—that is, muddy the waters, so to speak—regarding the actual facts about Roswell which were beginning to emerge at approximately the same time. A fuller discussion of the M J-12 controversy may be found in my online article, "The MJ-12 Affair: Facts, Questions, Comments", originally published in the MUFON UFO Journal in 1989.[1] Anyone wishing a well-grounded, objective understanding of the issues involved should also read anything written about MJ-12 by Barry Greenwood, Bob Todd, Kevin Randle and Brad Sparks. These researchers do not agree with each other on every point, to say the least, but they have definitely done their homework.

For its part, the U.S. Army Air Force, which later became the U.S Air Force—after first identifying the recovered Roswell object as a crashed "flying disc"—has subsequently issued various prosaic explanations for the Roswell Incident, apparently in the vain hope that the controversy will go away once and for all. While all of these officially-revised, supposed solutions to the mystery have now been thoroughly investigated and discredited by knowledgeable researchers, they have nevertheless clouded the key issues involved with the case—which was presumably the Air Force's actual intention all along.

No matter. Whether the official explanation for the mysterious debris discovered in 1947 involved a recovered weather balloon, a secret spy balloon, or any other kind of trial balloon the Air Force wishes to float, various public opinion polls have repeatedly revealed that most Americans remain highly dubious about the various "real" explanations offered by the U.S. government to explain away the Roswell Incident.

Perhaps even more unfortunate than the apparent disinformation campaign being orchestrated by the military, there now exists an entrenched popular cultural filter, through which anything Roswell must pass, inevitably tainting public perceptions of the ongoing serious research being conducted on the case. This mythology has manifested itself in sensationalistic public hoopla—such as the now-annual Roswell UFO Festival—as well as in popular science fiction and the urban, er. desert myths that are currently flourishing on the

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Internet. A rough approximation of these, ahem, astute discussions follows here:

"Wow! Did you know that the Roswell spacecraft was only one of ten UFO crashes in New Mexico?! Yeah, it's true! There's a secret underground alien base near the town of Dulce and, every now and then, when a UK' emerges from it, the military shoots it down! The last time it happened, the Army managed to get into the underground complex and fought a pitched battle with the aliens, who are the evil Grays!"

And blah, blah, blah, webpage after webpage. Skeptics smile knowingly at these naive and sometimes delusional ramblings, convinced that they further prove their own point: Roswell is a load of crap.

But if Roswell UFO proponents have suffered setbacks and endured widespread and sometimes hostile criticism from doubters of all persuasions, remarkable investigative progress has been made over the last three decades. Aside from the interviews with a great many legitimate witnesses associated with the case, it now appears that residual physical evidence relating to the Roswell Incident may have been discovered.

In 2002, a widely-publicized archeological excavation was undertaken at the Roswell debris field site under the direction of Dr. William H. Doleman, Principal Investigator at the University of New Mexico Office of Contract Archeology. The stated purposes of the dig were 1) to determine whether any anomalous deformation of the underlying soil was present, corresponding to the 1940s, but long-since hidden by natural erosion and deposition processes, and 2) whether any remaining crash debris was also present at that level.

Following the excavation, Dr. Doleman announced that a localized deformation of the subsurface was indeed found at one site, apparently caused by great force applied in a low-angle, downward direction. In other words, a fairly large object traveling at high speed apparently struck the ground there! However, no evidence of debris, per se, was immediately noted, which is not surprising given the credible reports by ex-military men of a massive clean-up operation following the crafts recovery. Further tests on the retrieved soil samples were to be conducted at the University of New Mexico, however, as I write this, no results have yet been announced.

On another front, high-tech analysis of an old photograph has seemingly

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yielded important information long sought by Roswell researchers. Most people who follow the case have heard about the infamous switcheroo in General Roger Ramey's office at Carswell Army Air Field, during which the recovered debris flown to Carswell by Major Jesse Marcel was removed and replaced by the wreckage of a downed weather balloon. Moments later, photographers were ushered in to record the "real" debris for posterity. Marcel—Roswell Army Air Field's intelligence officer at the time—confirmed all of this decades later. In one photo, General Ramey is seen squatting down next to the artfully-arranged remains, a faint smile on his lips and a classified telegram in his left hand—its tiny text visible, if not readable, in the blurry photograph.

Fortunately, technological tools now exist which permit a credible analysis of the message. Using computer-assisted image-enhancement techniques, researcher Dr. David Rudiak has, in my view, convincingly deciphered most of the telegram which, amazingly, appears to be a message from General Ramey to the Pentagon in which he describes the army's initial disposition of the recovered "disc" as well as the "victims" of the crash.

Rudiak's interpretation of the text is controversial—the hardcore Roswell skeptics dismiss it of course, however, so do some pro-Roswell investigators—but I am personally convinced that he has made an important discovery.

Rudiak's presentation of his research relating to the telegram, as well as his many other contributions to the Roswell case may be found at his website, www.roswellproof.com.

Because written commentary on Roswell—pro and con—is so pervasive these days, I will leave the debate to those who've devoted a significant amount of time and effort examining the evidence, such as it is. Anyone interested in reading those sometimes contentious discussions on the Internet will locate them with ease.

Instead, I will simply present a few facts and a handful of credible but unproved assertions which I personally think have merit. While most of these "data-points" are already well known, at least to UFO researchers, some of what I will present here is as yet unpublished. Having said that, there is no irrefutable "smoking gun" in the Roswell story—at least not yet—so the reader should not expect to find one here. Nevertheless, I have personally

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interviewed one individual whose words on the subject merit a wider audience.

Chet Lytle's Comments Regarding Roswell

Earlier in this book, I summarized my 1998 interview with Chester Lytle, whose engineering contributions to the revolutionary Manhattan Project during World War II had helped usher in the Nuclear Age. Lytle's postwar participation in atomic weapons stockpiling, while working for the Atomic Energy Commission, is equally noteworthy, lt was this involvement in the U.S. nuclear weapons program, in the early 1950s, which put him in the right place, at the right time, to hear a very interesting story about Roswell.

As noted in an earlier chapter, when I interviewed Lytle in 1998, for nearly two hours, almost all of his comments related to UFO sightings at atomic weapons development and testing areas. However, without any prompting from me, the subject then turned to Roswell. Unexpectedly Lytle told me that he had once heard—from a highly-credible source—that the object recovered near Roswell in 1947 was indeed a crashed extraterrestrial spacecraft. That source was none other than William H. Blanchard, who had been the base commander of Roswell Army Airfield at the time of the incident.

According to Lytle, both he and Blanchard, who was by now a general, had been visiting Eielson AFB, Alaska, in mid-February 1953. At the time, Blanchard was assigned to the Strategic Air Commands Eighth Air Force Headquarters, as Deputy Director of Operations. In that position, he helped direct the atomic weapons training of the aircrews for the new B-36s—the first American intercontinental bombers—some of which were based at Eielson. Lytle's own work with the Atomic Energy Commission required his supervision of the transfer of atomic and thermonuclear weapons from Albuquerque's Sandia Laboratory to "forward" bomber bases, including Eielson. Although Lytle and Blanchard had worked together in the past, in Alaska their paths crossed once again.

Meanwhile, Lytle's wife was in Chicago, about to give birth to a son, and Lytle was desperate to get home. Blanchard, who was "a very close friend" according to Lytle, offered to personally fly him in a bomber to an Air Force base in Illinois, possibly Chanute AFB, but Lytle couldn't recall its name.

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From there, Lytle could take a short commercial flight to Chicago. He accepted Blanchard's offer without hesitation.

During the long flight from Alaska to Illinois, the subject of UFOs came up. There had recently been sightings by Air Force personnel at Elmendorf AFB, near Anchorage, and the two men were discussing them. Suddenly, the general mentioned the Roswell Incident. Lytle, who held Top Secret clearances relating to his work with the AEC, was informed by Blanchard that a crashed alien spacecraft had indeed been recovered in July 1947. The general said that four dead humanoid beings had been aboard.

Startled by Lytle's unexpected admission, I asked, "Blanchard actually told you that the Roswell object was an alien spacecraft?" Lytle replied emphatically, "Oh, absolutely!"

If Lytle is to be believed, his old friend had let him in on what was arguably the greatest secret of all time—even though he had no need-to-know about it. I will simply say that if the conversation occurred as portrayed, it certainly would not have been the first time in history that an important military secret was informally discussed between friends, in violation of the security measures surrounding it.

In any case, Lytle then added that he had heard from another high, level Air Force source that some of the bodies had been initially sent to Muroc Army Airfield in California but, eventually, "they all wound up at Wright Field." Lytle also said that he had been privy to "leaks about autopsies on the bodies from people who had been in and seen them."

Those who have followed the controversial alien spaceship-recovery saga will know that Wright Field—later renamed Wright-Patterson AFB_ figures prominently in the Roswell story. According to Lytle's sources, the recovered alien craft was also stored at Wright Field, but in Hanger 5—not Hanger 18—as Roswell lore has it. "I had the highest clearances involving atomic weapons stockpiling," said Lytle, "I was very heavily cleared to do what I did, but I was never allowed into that area."

Lytle further told me that he personally knew the general at the base who was responsible for protecting the big secret, but he refused to identify him. However, Lytle did say the general's secretary was the wife of his own Air Force security aide when he held a position with the Atomic Energy

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Commission at Wright-Patterson in the early 1950s. When I asked Lytle to identify those two individuals and to elaborate on these tantalizing disclosures, he deflected my questions.

To date, Lytle's assertions about the recovery of the Roswell craft are unsupported by declassified documents or—in the case of his conversation with General Blanchard—the testimony of other witnesses. As such, they must remain, for the moment, in the realm of highly-credible but still-unconfirmed anecdotal evidence.

Lytle, who died in 2004, was obviously someone who could keep a secret, or he wouldn't have been entrusted with the sensitive positions he held over the years. As noted earlier, it took more than eight years of my asking, cajoling, and occasionally pleading, to get him to talk about things that had happened nearly 50 years earlier!

From our very first meeting in 1990, it was clear that Lytle firmly believed that it was his patriotic duty to keep quiet about matters of national security—including his knowledge of UFOs snooping around U.S. nuclear weapons sites. At the same time, he seemed to understand that the amazing events that he had witnessed, or heard about from others with whom he worked, inherently involved legitimate questions relating to the American people's right-to-know. Indeed, on one occasion o'er dinner, he had acknowledged as much to me. I believe that it was this sense of a larger, more fundamental patriotism which ultimately led to his consenting to be formally interviewed.

I do not believe that Lytle was the type of person who would fabricate or exaggerate. He was not at all insistent about having an intriguing tale to tell. On the contrary, he was for years resolutely unwilling to elaborate upon his initial intriguing remarks to me, despite my insistence that he do so. Once he did agree to an interview, Lytle did not gush information with abandon or ostentation, but offered what he knew in a measured, matter-of-fact manner. If he could not remember names or details about events that had occurred decades before, he did not attempt to "fill in the blanks" with speculation, but simply apologized for the memory lapse. In short, I consider Lytle's remarks about Roswell worth publicizing, even though they are based on hearsay.

Other Credible Sources

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So who else might have something of significance to say about Roswell? There are dozens of potential candidates, in particular the small group of eyewitnesses who saw and sometimes even handled the strange wreckage. I will discuss a few of those individuals later. But there are also other credible sources who, although not eyewitnesses, nevertheless have important information to offer. Below is my own short list of persons whose commentary I find noteworthy:

In 1990, a leading Roswell researcher, Dr. Kevin D. Randle, interviewed retired Air Force Brigadier General Arthur E. Exon, regarding his knowledge of the incident and its aftermath.[2] As is the case with Chet Lytle, Exon's perspective on Roswell is that of an outsider, who had no direct involvement in the recovery operation or related events at Wright Field. If this is so, what does Exon have to contribute to an understanding of what really happened at the time?

In July 1947, then Lt. Col. Exon was halfway through a two-year industrial administration course at the Air Force Institute of Technology, located at Wright Army Air Field. Much later, between 1964-66, Exon was the commander of the base, by then renamed Wright-Patterson AFB. In the course of audio-taped interviews conducted by Dr. Randle in 1991 and 1994, General Exon confirmed the following:

1) While at Wright Army Air Field in July 1947, he had been told that an alien "spacecraft", and the bodies of its crew, had been secretly recovered in New Mexico and were being shipped to Wright Field for study.

2) The Commander of the Eighth Air Force, General Roger Ramey—together with various command personnel at Roswell Army Air Field—had concocted and released a cover story about a downed weather balloon to hide the true nature of the recovered object. This had been done to keep the public in the dark and to allow the commanders time to prepare a briefing for their superiors at the Pentagon and President Truman.

3) Analytical laboratories at Wright Field were subsequently employed to conduct chemical and metallurgical tests on the recovered debris, which was completely unlike anything previously studied there. Further, medical personnel at the base performed autopsies on the aliens' bodies.

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4) While flying over the debris field in a small military aircraft, some months after the secret recovery operation, Exon had observed an approximately 500-foot-long gash in the parched desert terrain. According to Exon, the furrow bad been made by the spacecraft which hit the ground, tore apart, became airborne again, and ultimately crashed many miles to the east, just north of Roswell.

At one point—referring to the analytical teams at Wright Field—Exon told Randle, "… They knew they had something new in their hands. The metal and material was unknown to [everyone] I talked to. Whatever they found, I never heard what the results were. A couple of guys thought it might be Russian, but the overall consensus was that the pieces were from space. Everyone from the White House on down knew that what we had found was not of this world within 24 hours of our finding it… Roswell was the recovery of a craft from space."[3]

Regarding the reports of alien bodies, Exon said, "There was another location where… apparently the main body of the spacecraft was...where they did say there were bodies… They were all found, apparently, outside the craft itself but were in fairly good condition. In other words, the) weren't broken up a lot."[4]

When asked whether the bodies were flown to Wright Field, Exon replied, "That's my information. But one of them went to the [Army's] mortuary outfit… I think at that time it was in Denver. But the strongest information was that they were brought to Wright-Pat."[5]

Kevin Randle says that Exon also elaborated on the two locations in the desert related to the crash, orienting them northwest to southeast. However, other than the long furrow at the initial impact site, and a great many tire tracks at both sites, he never personally witnessed any of the evidence of the crash or recovery operation.

Randle recently told me, "I will also note that the Air Force, during their [1994] investigation of Roswell, ignored Exon—although they had his name. I gave it to [1st Lt. James] McAndrew prior to their release of the first report [in September of that year] but they apparently never acted on it. Why? Because they didn't want to call an Air Force general a liar, and possibly

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because they knew he wasn't. McAndrew's attitude was that there was nothing to the Roswell case and that I should admit that I was only in this for the money."[6]

(The 1994 Air Force report to which Randle refers, titled, "The Roswell Report: Fact verses Fiction in the New Mexico Desert," concluded that the debris found by ranch foreman Mack Brazel in July 1947 was from a Top Secret Army Air Force research balloon project, code-named Mogul. The report claims that a Mogul balloon—NYU Flight No.4—launched on June 4, 1947, was "probably" responsible for all of the crashed spaceship hoopla which subsequently surfaced. However, Dr. David Rudiak and Brad Sparks, after carefully analyzing weather (that is, winds aloft) data, have convincingly demonstrated that the balloon launched on that date could not have landed on the Brazel ranch.[7])

In any case, Randle then told me, "[McAndrew] called me a couple of times and we talked about Roswell. He put pressure on me, as a former Air Force officer, and said that he understood that I was just trying to make a buck or two [so] I could tell him about it. He seemed to really believe that, or he wanted me to break ranks with my fellows. How would it have looked if he could say that Randle admitted that he was just in it for the money. His motive was transparent and, of course, as I told him, I would have published the information for free because I believed it to be an extraordinary story. Anyway, [McAndrew] eventually gave up on me and they went ahead and published the report knowing full well that they weren't telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth… McAndrew might not have known the truth, but he was part of the machine to keep it buried."[8]

I thanked Randle for standing his ground in the face of such pressure. In any case, to date, General Exon is the highest-ranking military officer to assert that the Roswell Incident involved the recovery of an extraterrestrial spacecraft. He died in 2005.

Another credible source of information regarding the rumored UFO secrets kept at Wright-Patterson AFB is the late Barry Goldwater. Although his testimony contains no explicit reference to the Roswell UFO crash, rumors of a link between the alleged recovery of an alien spacecraft and the material housed in a mysterious facility at the base have refused to die.

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Goldwater was one of the most respected and influential politicians in recent American history. A long-time United States Senator from Arizona, he was the Republican presidential candidate who ran unsuccessfully against President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. During his senatorial career, Goldwater held several important positions, including Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Less well known was his unwavering interest in UFOs. By his own admission, he placed credence in the rumor that the U.S. government secretly possessed undeniable evidence confirming that UFOs are extraterrestrial.

In the late 1970s, it was widely reported that Goldwater had once been confidentially informed of the existence of an above-Top Secret facility at Wright-Patterson AFB, supposedly known as the "Blue Room", within which was alleged to be irrefutable proof that UFOs were alien spacecraft. Some of the media accounts inferred that the highly-restricted building contained the debris recovered from the Roswell craft, as well as the bodies of its crew. Further, it was said, Goldwater had attempted to enter the facility to see for himself, only to be rebuffed by a high-ranking Air Force officer.

In an effort to substantiate these stories, researcher Lee M. Graham wrote to Goldwater, asking him to corroborate or refute the allegations. On April 11, 1979, the senator responded in a letter written on official U.S. Senate stationary. "It is true I was denied access to a facility at Wright-Patterson," wrote Goldwater, "Because I never got in, I can't tell you what was inside. We both know about the rumors."[9]

Not entirely satisfied with this answer, Graham later wrote to the senator again, asking him to elaborate. On October 19, 1981, Goldwater responded a second time, expanding upon his previous statements. "First, he wrote, "let me tell you that I have long ago given up acquiring access to the so-called blue room at Wright-Patterson, as I have had one long string of denials from chief after chief [U. S. Air Force Chiefs of Staff], so I have given up." But then Goldwater went on to make a very intriguing statement, "To tell you the truth, Mr. Graham, this thing has gotten so highly classified, even though I will admit there is a lot of it that has been released, it's just impossible to get anything on it."[10]

Here, Goldwater's words are unfortunately and probably unintentionally

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ambiguous. He apparently makes reference to the numerous, low-level government documents about UFOs which had only recently been declassified via the Freedom of Information Act. But he entwines this statement with the remark about "this thing" being so highly-classified that no information about it can be obtained. Was Goldwater referring specifically to the secret building, or to the bottom-line answers about UFOs in general? Perhaps we will never know. However, because Graham's two letters inquired about the Wright-Patterson facility in particular, it seems probable that the senator was referring to the Blue Room.

Goldwater was to later make public statements re-affirming the information he provided to Lee Graham and a handful of other correspondents. On October 13, 1988, he appeared on talk show host Larry King's nationally syndicated radio program and responded to a caller who asked the senator if the Blue Room story were true:

CALLER: "Hello, Senator Goldwater, I've heard in the past that you have an interest in UFOs. I just finished a book called, Above Top Secret, by Timothy Good, where three or four of your letters are quoted concerning your attempts to enter Wright-Patterson Air Force Base."

SENATOR GOLDWATER: "Uh-huh."

CALLER: "Do you believe that the government is withholding information on UFOs?"

SENATOR GOLDWATER: "Yes I do. But I don't know enough about the subject involving Wright-Pat[terson AFB] to form any opinion. I remember when I first tried to get into that room out at Wright-Pat and I went to General Curtis LeMay, an old friend of mine, and asked him. He used some pretty plain language and in effect, told me to 'go to hell' and..."

LARRY KING: "That's the room where they are rumored to have aliens?"

SENATOR GOLDWATER: "Well, it's a storage room where they are supposed to have some of the evidence they've collected relative to Unidentified Flying Objects. I have never… I wouldn't argue against them. I wouldn't argue for them. My only thinking on it is this planet of ours is one of several billion planets in this universe. I can't believe that God or whomever

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is in charge would put thinking bodies on only one planet. So I'm a firm believer that something can fly around here that the Wright Brothers didn't have anything to do with."[11]

So what are we to make of Goldwater's statements? First, it is obvious that he considered the source of his information about the Blue Room to be credible. After all, by his own admission, he made repeated attempts to gain access over a several year period, only to be rebuffed by "chief after chief." Interestingly, when writing to Lee Graham, Goldwater refers to the Blue Room as a "facility". On Larry King's program, however, lie characterizes it as "a storage room". Perhaps I am making more of this distinction than is warranted but, to me, the former description suggests something more imposing, perhaps a small building capable of housing the fabled spacecraft and alien bodies. "We both know about the rumors", Goldwater cryptically wrote to Graham. But when Larry King asks if aliens are stored there, Goldwater does not answer directly but refers only to the "evidence they've collected".

Perhaps Goldwater's response was intentionally evasive, tailored for a national radio audience, and designed to downplay the more dramatic rumors he had alluded to in a private letter to one citizen, Lee Graham. Whatever the case, the senator's on-air characterization of the Blue Room as a "storage room" certainly suggests a more modest space—perhaps capable of storing alien bodies but unlikely to house a recovered spacecraft. Of course, it's possible that the senator himself did not know the scale—the square footage—of the Blue Room. Surely he did not just show up on the doorstep and demand entry but, rather, made inquiries in advance. Since he was repeatedly denied access to the Blue Room, it is quite likely that he had no idea what the facility looked like or even where it was located on the base.

In any case, the level of classification required for admission to the secret building had to be very high. Even though Goldwater was a powerful U. S. Senator who held Top Secret clearances relating to hi' duties on the Intelligence Committee, and was also a Major General in the U. S. Air Force Reserves, he still did not have a "need-to-know" about the contents of the Blue Room. And remember, according to Goldwater. General LeMay did not

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deny the rumors the senator had heard, he just refused him entry to the facility in no uncertain terms.

This fact alone is significant because it undercuts the impression the U.S. Air Force has been trying to foist on the public for decades—when it repeatedly asserts that its declassified, low-level Project Bluebook files represent the sum of its knowledge about UFOs, and its release of those files demonstrates its complete candor on the subject. It can be said with certainty that whatever secrets the Blue Room holds, their importance far exceeds the revelations found in Blue Book's files. Nevertheless, when all is said and done, we must finally acknowledge, as did Goldwater, that the contents of that mysterious facility remain, at least for the moment, in the realm of rumor.

One personal note regarding the alleged storage of a crashed UFO and/or the bodies of the crew at Wright-Patterson AFB: Over the last 27 years, while on the college lecture circuit, I have been approached by dozens of individuals, from various audiences, who have claimed that, while stationed at Wright-Patterson, they had seen either the Roswell UFO or the bodies of its crew. I call this collection of tales "The Open Hanger Door" stories, because most of them begin, "I was just walking past this hanger and noticed that the door was opened slightly..." These persons then describe their curiosity having gotten the best of them, peeking through the crack and, much to their astonishment, seeing a crumpled flying saucer, or small bodies in cryogenic storage, depending on the particular story.

While it is not impossible that such a scenario actually occurred, let's say once or twice since 1947, it is nevertheless extremely unlikely. To believe that it occurred numerous times is simply naive. That the ultimate UFO secret —a recovered alien spacecraft and the corpses of its crew—would be repeatedly compromised by something so pedestrian as an unsecured hanger door is simply implausible.

Another credible source on the subject of recovered UFOs is former senior CIA official Victor Marchetti. As noted earlier, in May 1979, Marchetti wrote a very interesting article titled, "How the CIA Views the UFO Phenomenon." The article's content disappointed many ufologists because Marchetti failed to expose the wealth of highly-classified, UFO-related secrets presumed to

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exist in the agency's files.

Of course, if those secrets do exist—and I personally believe they do—no one, including Marchetti, would have been able to divulge them without immediate and severe legal repercussions. When former U.S. State Department analyst Daniel Ellsberg leaked the so-called Pentagon Papers in 1971—thereby exposing decades of covert and often duplicitous U.S. policy toward Viet Nam—the full weight of the law was immediately brought to bear against him. Ellsberg was forced to wage a protracted court battle to avoid going to prison, possibly for the rest of his life, given the seriousness of the charges against him.

Even if Marchetti had knowledge of important UFO secrets—a questionable premise, given the stringent compartmentalization and need-to-know practices within CIA—he probably wouldn't have leaked them. His earlier whistle-blowing actions against the agency had focused on its illegal violations of its charter, which restricts CIA's scope of operations to foreign, rather than domestic, intelligence-gathering. Marchetti further contended that the agency had routinely abused American laws in other ways, through its policies and practices, and was a threat to the American democracy.

Regardless, in his magazine article, Marchetti did make what I consider to be a significant admission: While with the agency, he had heard persistent rumors regarding the recovery of crashed UFOs. He wrote,

During my years in the CIA, UFOs were not a subject of common discussion. But neither were they treated in a disdainful or derisive manner, especially not by the agency's scientists. Instead, the topic was rarely discussed at internal meetings. It seemed to fall into the category of 'very sensitive activities'... People simply did not talk about the UFO phenomenon.

There were, however, rumors at high levels of the CIA—rumors of... little gray men whose ships had crashed, or had been shot down, being kept 'on ice' by the Air Force at FTD (the Foreign Technology Division) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.[12]

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While I have no evidence to support this belief, I suspect that Marchetti's former superiors at the CIA were not terribly happy about these intriguing admissions.

In sum, there are credible sources who have gone on-the-record about the subject of recovered UFOs: Nuclear weapons engineer Chet Lytle, U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Arthur Exon, U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater, and senior CIA official Victor Marchetti—a select group whose testimony about the apparent reality of UFO crashes is, in my opinion, worthy of our serious and open-minded consideration.

Lytle and Exon, in particular, explicitly contend that one of those crashes occurred near Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947. But neither of them personally laid eyes on the mangled wreckage and deceased crew. So what do the *primary* Roswell sources have to say?

The Eyewitnesses

The rancher who found the strange debris, Mack Brazel, was held incommunicado by the Army shortly after he reported his discovery and, according to his son, was told to keep quiet about it, in the most severe terms. He did just that, and was never publicly interviewed. By the time the Roswell story resurfaced some 30 years later, Brazel had already died.

However, prior to reporting the debris to the army, Brazel had taken one of the pieces over to a nearby ranch and showed it to his neighbors, the Proctors. Decades later, Loretta Proctor told researchers Kevin Randle and Don Schmitt that Mac had with him "a piece of material that looked like 'balsa' [balsa wood] which was light tan in color. But he demonstrated that he couldn't cut it with his pocket knife, and it wouldn't burn. He also said that there were pieces back at his place that were tinfoil-like but would automatically unfold after being crumpled, without any trace of creasing."[13]

That's one very durable and talented weather balloon-slash-radar reflector! Or was it a secret spy balloon? I've lost track. There have been so many official announcements by the Air Force about the "real" or "probable" source of the debris.

I was present during one of the Randle and Schmitt interviews with Loretta

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Proctor. When they asked her if Mac had mentioned exactly where he had found the debris, she responded by saying that he had just mentioned "the plains"—explaining to me after I asked, that she meant the flat desert terrain north of the town of Capitan (but definitely not on the Plains of San Agustin, some 150 miles to the west, as has been claimed by some researchers, as well as now-discredited witnesses).

Brazel never mentioned anything about finding the bodies of strange creatures, a fact used by some skeptics to dismiss the notion that a craft of some kind had crashed. However, as noted earlier, the available anecdotal evidence—including the testimony of General Exon—suggests that the debris field was only where the nearly-disabled spaceship scraped along the ground before becoming airborne again, not the location where it finally crashed. That site was many miles east of the Brazel ranch. Therefore, by this scenario, Brazel never had an opportunity to see the bodies.

The first member of the military to view the mysterious wreckage was then Major Jesse Marcel Sr., the intelligence officer at Roswell Army Air Field. A year earlier, during Operation Crossroads, Marcel had been tasked with providing security for the 509th Bomb Group, which had participated as observers to the tests. As previously noted, Crossroads involved the detonation of the first atomic bombs since the end of World War II.

Without going into the kind of detail provided by many other books on Roswell, Marcel accompanied Brazel back to his ranch and examined the debris, which he later described as strewn across an area three-quarters of mile long by several hundred feet wide. Marcel retrieved a few of the pieces and returned to Roswell. Because he arrived late at night, he went straight home, where he showed some of the strange material to his wife and son, Jesse Jr., before delivering it to the base the following morning.

Marcel Jr., a physician living in Montana, served in the Army National Guard, retiring as a colonel in 2006. He was recently recalled for a tour in Iraq. He has described the debris he saw and held that night in July 1947 in numerous interviews and books, including his own, The Roswell Legacy. His statements about the material his father collected mirror those of Loretta Proctors, with one exception: Marcel says one piece of lightweight metal was I-beam-shaped and had hieroglyphic-like symbols arranged across its length.

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Shortly after Marcel Sr. arrived on base the next day, he was ordered to accompany the debris samples to 8th Army Headquarters, at Carswell Army Air Field, Fort Worth, Texas. Once there, according to Marcel, the material was switched with wreckage from a downed weather balloon, just before an Army photographer was called in to photograph it. The chief of the 8th Air Force, General Roger Ramey, then issued a second press release about the recovered debris, which completely contradicted the first one released in Roswell, announcing the recovery of a "flying disk". In reality, said the new release, the disk was merely a misidentified weather balloon. The clear but unspoken implication was that Major Jesse Marcel, the base intelligence officer, was so inept that he hadn't recognized a shredded neoprene balloon and the remnants of its radar reflector, composed of aluminum foil, balsa-wood and string. Displeased at having to take the fall but nevertheless dutiful, Marcel bit his lip and kept quiet about the actual facts surrounding the incident for the next 34 years. Later on, out of public view, Marcel was promoted, attesting to his superiors' true assessment of his capabilities. Indeed, as David Rudiak writes,

… Once Marcel's service record began making the rounds in 1996 and 1997, it became clear that Marcel was generally very well thought of by his superior officers both before and after the Roswell events, including those directly involved in Roswell, such as Col. Blanchard and Gen. Ramey. There are no clear references to the Roswell events in his post-Roswell evaluations, which are overwhelmingly laudatory…

In addition, Marcel's career did not seem to suffer any adverse effects. He remained the head intelligence officer at Roswell for another year. He was promoted to Lt. Colonel in the Air Force Reserve the following November (both Blanchard and Dubose recommended approval) and was not quietly let go when his commission ran out in early 1948, as might well have happened if the Air Force felt they had a rash and unreliable intelligence officer who caused them a great deal of public embarrassment. Instead he was recommissioned, and was soon transferred to Washington D.C. in August 1948 for higher intelligence work…

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First he was made the SAC (Strategic Air Command) Chief of a presumed foreign technology intelligence division, an odd assignment for somebody who allegedly couldn't identify even mundane balloon debris… Then at the Pentagon's insistence, he was soon transferred to the Top Secret Special Weapons Project, given access to highly sensitive material, and served as the primary briefing officer for the higher brass in the project. There he also received two highly laudatory evaluations. Obviously the Air Force continued to feel Marcel was an extremely competent and trustworthy intelligence officer following the Roswell incident. None of this fits the profile of someone who badly bungled his intelligence job at Roswell, as the debunkers contend.[14]

The second official "explanation" for the Roswell debris undoubtedly disappointed most everyone who had read or heard about the disk recovery announcement, but it was generally accepted as fact and the whole story quickly slipped from pubic consciousness. There the matter lay until the late 1970s, when Lt. Col. Jesse Marcel, by then retired from the military and elderly, was interviewed by researcher Stanton Friedman. Marcel candidly described the remarkable properties of the material he recovered in 1947, and forcefully insisted that it was not a weather balloon. In fact, said Marcel, the debris was "not of this world." Thus the Roswell UFO story was reborn.

Another authoritative source on Roswell, Walter G. Haut, was the individual who actually wrote the *first* press release, the one confirming the recovery of a "flying disk." On July 8, 1947, some four days after the crash of the mysterious object, then 1st Lt. Haut, the Public Information Officer at Roswell Army Air Field, was ordered by Base Commander Col. William Blanchard to hand-carry the official release to the Roswell media, which then consisted of two newspapers and two radio stations.

Once published, the startling announcement was quickly picked up by the wire services whereupon it immediately created a firestorm of interest around the world. Because widespread reports of flying saucer sightings had appeared in U.S. newspapers over the previous two weeks—beginning with the now-famous Kenneth Arnold sighting in Washington state—Roswell

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Army Air Field was immediately flooded with calls from the national media, as well as foreign newspapers, all of them inquiring about the recovered saucer.

Soon after the Roswell story resurfaced in the late 1970s, Walter Haut made himself available for interviews, during which he generally substantiated Jesse Marcel's statements on the incident and its aftermath. I interviewed Haut in 1985—well after other researchers—in a smoke-filled hotel room in Roswell.

Lighting one cigarette after another, Haut repeated the same statements he had made previously to others: Yes, the recovered object was in fact a crashed flying disk. Yes, Col. Blanchard had personally ordered him to issue an announcement of the sensational find. Yes, the story was quickly changed after the debris was flown to 8th Army Headquarters. As lie had in other interviews, Haut claimed that he hadn't seen any of the debris himself, but he did say that reliable sources had told him of its exotic properties. And, said Halt, there were other reliable rumors about bodies being recovered from the crashed craft—bodies that were humanoid bin definitely not human.

Haut essentially told this same story to reporters and researchers for the next two decades, with little elaboration. However, he did grant an interview to researchers Wendy Connors and Dennis Balthauser in 2000—during which he was apparently far more candid about his own knowledge of the incident —however, he stipulated that the taped conversation not be made public until after his death.

Then, in 2002, Haut secretly signed a prepared affidavit relating to his first-hand knowledge of the Roswell Incident which, it turns out, was far more dramatic than he had ever let on. As was the case with the 2000 interview, Haut required that the sworn statement remain sealed until after his death, which occurred in December 2005. For whatever reason, the affidavit was not published until June 2007, when it appeared in the book, *Witness to Roswell*, by researchers Tom Carey and Don Schmitt.[15] The authors now say Haut had privately told them that he knew much more about the Roswell Incident than he had ever admitted in his oft-repeated public statements on the subject.

In any case, inserted below is Walter Haut's sworn affidavit, as published in *Witness to Roswell*:

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2002 SEALED AFFIDAVIT OF WALTER G. HAUT

DATE: December 26, 2002

WITNESS: Chris Xxxxxx

NOTARY: Beverlee Morgan

(1) My name is Walter G. Haut

(2) I was born on June 2, 1922

(3) My address is 1405 W. 7th Street, Roswell, NM 88203

(4) I am retired.

(5) In July, 1947, I was stationed at the Roswell Army Air Base in Roswell, New Mexico, serving as the base Public Information Officer. I had spent the 4th of July weekend (Saturday, the 5th, and Sunday, the 6th) at my private residence about 10 miles north of the base, which was located south of town.

(6) I was aware that someone had reported the remains of a downed vehicle by mid-morning after my return to duty at the base on Monday, July 7. I was aware that Major Jesse A. Marcel, head of intelligence, was sent by the base commander, Col. William Blanchard, to investigate.

(7) By late in the afternoon that same day, I would learn that additional civilian reports came in regarding a second site just north of Roswell. I would spend the better part of the day attending to my regular duties Hearing little if anything more.

(8) On Tuesday morning, July 8, I would attend the regularly scheduled staff meeting at 7:30 a.m. Besides Blanchard, Marcel; CIC [Counterintelligence Corp] Capt. Sheridan Cavitt; Col. James I. Hopkins, the operations officer; Lt. Col. Ulysses S. Nero, the supply officer; and from Carswell AAF in Fort Worth, Texas, Blanchard's boss, Brig. Gen. Roger Ramey and his chief of staff. Col. Thomas J. Dubose were also in attendance. The main topic of discussion was reported by Marcel and Cavitt regarding an extensive debris field in Lincoln County approx. 75 miles NW of Roswell. A preliminary briefing was provided by Blanchard about the second site approx. 40 miles north of town. Samples of wreckage were passed around the table. It was

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unlike any material I had or have ever seen in my life. Pieces which resembled metal foil, paper thin yet extremely strong, and pieces with unusual markings along their length were handled from man to man, each voicing their opinion. No one was able to identify the crash debris.

(9) One of the main concerns discussed at the meeting was whether we should go public or not with the discovery. Gen. Ramey proposed a plan, which I believe originated from his bosses at the Pentagon. Attention needed to be diverted from the more important site north of town by acknowledging the other location. Too many civilians were already involved and the press already was informed. I was not completely informed how this would be accomplished.

(10) At approximately 9:30 a.m. Col. Blanchard phoned my office and dictated the press release of having in our possession a flying disc, coming from a ranch northwest of Roswell, and Marcel flying the material to higher headquarters. I was to deliver the news release to radio stations KGFL and KSWS, and newspapers the Daily Record and the Morning Dispatch.

(11) By the time the news release hit the wire services, my office was inundated with phone calls from around the world. Messages stacked up on my desk, and rather than deal with the media concern, Col. Blanchard suggested that I go home and "hide out."

(12) Before leaving the base, Col. Blanchard took me personally to Building 84 [AKA Hangar P-3], a B-29 hangar located on the east side of the tarmac. Upon first approaching the building, I observed that it was under heavy guard both outside and inside. Once inside, I was permitted from a safe distance to first observe the object just recovered north of town. It was approx. 12 to 15 feet in length, not quite as wide, about 6 feet high, and more of an egg shape. Lighting was poor, but its surface did appear metallic. No windows, portholes, wings, tail section, or landing gear were visible.

(13) Also from a distance, I was able to see a couple of bodies under a canvas tarpaulin. Only the heads extended beyond the covering, and I was not able to make out any features. The heads did appear larger than normal and the contour of the canvas suggested the size of a 10 year old child. At a later date in Blanchard's office, he would extend his arm about 4 feet above the floor to indicate the height.

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(14) I was informed of a temporary morgue set up to accommodate the recovered bodies.

(15) I was informed that the wreckage was not “hot” (radioactive).

(16) Upon his return from Fort Worth, Major Marcel described to me taking pieces of the wreckage to Gen. Ramey’s office and after returning from a map room, finding the remains of a weather balloon and radar kite substituted while he was out of the room. Marcel was very upset over this situation. We would not discuss it again.

(17) I would be allowed to make at least one visit to one of the recovery sites during the military cleanup. I would return to the base with some of the wreckage which I would display in my office.

(18) I was aware two separate teams would return to each site months later for periodic searches for any remaining evidence.

(19) I am convinced that what I personally observed was some type of craft and its crew from outer space.

(20) I have not been paid nor given anything of value to make this statement, and it is the truth to the best of my recollection.

Signed: Walter G. Haut

December 26, 2002 Signature witnessed by:

Chris Xxxxxxx

END OF AFFIDAVIT

Obviously, ol’ Walt had kept his cards very close to his chest. Shortly after the affidavit was published, Roswell researcher, Dr. David Rudiak wrote, “According to Carey and Schmitt, Haut waited until the end of his life to reveal this information because he had promised Col. Blanchard to not disclose it while he was alive. Haut may have had another personal reason. He was well-aware how other major Roswell witnesses had been savaged by debunkers, a prime example being Jesse Marcel, the intelligence officer. By initially denying direct knowledge of the more controversial aspects about Roswell, Haut would be denying critics a convenient target. However, with

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Haut's now-public interview and affidavit confessing to being an eyewitness to the debris, spacecraft, and bodies, he will no doubt be attacked as a liar who changed his story, a senile old man, or even worse."[16]

Rudiak's predictions proved true, and the controversy surrounding the affidavit has gained momentum since its publication. Roswell supporters and skeptics alike have noted that Haut exhibited clear signs of dementia during the last years of his life, raising questions about the validity of the statements contained in the affidavit.

For example, Kevin Randle, says, "In the Connor and Balthauser interview, Haut contradicts himself frequently, sometimes in a single paragraph. Looking at the way their interview went, it suggests a man who is in conflict with himself, but also one who might no longer have a firm grasp on reality. The statement created by Schmitt and Carey does not reflect the reality in which it was created, boiling everything down to consistent, coherent statements. I heard and saw nothing in the earlier interview to suggest that Walter was telling the whole truth and that lie was quite confused. This is an important fact."[17]

In response to their critics, Carey and Schmitt have acknowledged that the affidavit had not been written by Haut himself, but was prepared for his approval and signature, based on various "hints" Haut had dropped over the years in the authors' presence. They also say that Haut had read the affidavit several times prior to approving its wording and further note that the signing was executed with his doctor's consent and in the presence of three witnesses. Therefore, although Haut's mental state was acknowledged to be somewhat impaired at the time, he was medically judged to be capable of comprehending its contents.

In September 2007, Haut's daughter, Julie A. Shuster, confirmed all of these facts, stating that her father had read and re-read the affidavit in her presence, clearly understood and approved its wording, and willingly signed it.18 A prepared affidavit is commonplace in the American legal system, given that most people cannot write as well as those with a legal background. Once signed, a sworn affidavit is considered legally-binding and valid, no matter who actually wrote it.

But if the Roswell Incident did in fact involve the secret recovery of a

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crashed alien spacecraft, why does an important declassified document on UFOs, written only months after Roswell, explicitly state that no physical evidence had yet been recovered to irrefutably establish the existence of the mysterious aerial objects?

Conflicting Information?

As I mentioned earlier in this book, on September 23, 1947, General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General of the Air Materiel Command, sent a secret memorandum to Brigadier General George Schulgen, Chief of the Air Intelligence Requirements Division at the Pentagon, in response to Schulgen's request for information concerning the widely-reported "flying discs". In the memo, Twining presented a detailed summary of the objects' appearance and actions, drawn from various sighting reports, but then categorically stated that no wreckage from one of the unidentified aircraft had yet been recovered. He wrote, "Due consideration must be given [to] the following...the lack of physical evidence in the shape of crash recovered exhibits which would undeniably prove the existence of these objects."

This begs the obvious question: If the Roswell case actually involved the recovery of a wrecked alien spacecraft, how can we reconcile that fact with General Twining's point-blank statement, written less than three months later, regarding the lack of physical evidence to support the reality of the flying disks?

Two key points need to be made here: First, it's entirely likely that the Roswell Incident was so unbelievably secret that General Twining, who arguably had no need-to-know about the spacecraft recovery operation, was being entirely truthful when he wrote that no one in his command, himself included, had any knowledge of recovered physical evidence. Kevin Randle adds, "I would note here that this document was prepared by a lieutenant general (3 stars) at the request of a brigadier general (one star) so that skeptical claims that Twining was lying to a superior are untrue. It is also important to note that Twining could answer the questions directed to him, or more accurately his command could answer them and the mission could be accomplished without disclosing any top secret material."[19]

Second, as Randle correctly noted years ago, the Twining memorandum

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was classified SECRET, not TOP SECRET. According to military protocol, nothing—not one word—about any subject classified at a higher level than Secret could have appeared in the memo. In other words, even if General Twining did have personal knowledge of the presumably Top Secret (or above Top Secret) Roswell recovery operation, he could not have mentioned it in his Secret message to General Schulgen because of its lower level of classification.

Randle's observation is authoritative. He is currently a major in the Army National Guard and has served numerous tours on active duty as an intelligence officer, including a tour in Iraq. He will soon retire as a Lt. Col.

While neither I nor anyone else can currently hold up in public a piece of the Roswell UFO, several highly-credible sources have attested to the craft's reality and extraterrestrial origin. Of course, this type of information will never satisfy the skeptics, and it probably shouldn't. After all, physical evidence is one thing; anecdotal evidence is quite another. That said, the really hardened skeptics—that is, the blind debunkers—will themselves have to wear the mantle of "conspiracy buff" if they choose to suggest that Air Force General Arthur Exon, Atomic Energy Commission manager Chet Lytle, Army Air Force Lt. Walter Haut, CIA analyst Victor Marchetti and U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater—none of whom knew each other—have all conspired to create a fantasy about recovered alien spaceships. Clearly, that is simply not the case.

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28. Warped and Hyper

Although some oh-so-clever UFO debunkers, when reviewing this book, are bound to use the title of this chapter to mock me, I am not referring here to my sense of humor and my daily caffeine intake.

As noted in the chapter, “Visitors”, any extraterrestrial or interdimensional beings capable of coming to Earth, repeatedly, would almost certainly not rely on a linear—point A to point B—travel mode. The distances between stars and their respective solar systems are simply too vast, and the journey from their world(s) to ours would take far too long, to say nothing of the return trip. Instead, such beings would have to utilize some type of faster-than-light (FTL) propulsion to accomplish *routine* interstellar travel. However, as discussed elsewhere, there is one fundamental problem with the FTL scenario, or so it would seem: Einsteins Special Theory of Relativity states that it is impossible for any object—including a spaceship—to reach the speed of light, to say nothing of superluminal velocities.

Given this theoretical universal speed limit, physicists have long maintained that practicable interstellar travel is impossible. If Einstein is correct, they argue, then the insurmountable “light barrier”, coupled with the formidable distances between stars, would forever prevent the beings on any planet, no matter how advanced, from easily visiting other worlds outside their own solar system. (Therefore, say these experts, UFOs—which seem to appear and depart fairly frequently—can not possibly be interstellar spacecraft.)

Of course, these objections are predicated on the belief that Einsteins light-limit dictum is the final word on the subject. In short, those who subscribe to this view essentially believe that other, more advanced beings living elsewhere in the universe cannot possibly have a more advanced understanding of the cosmos and subsequently use that knowledge to Wove throughout space in ways we do not yet understand.

Fortunately, about a decade ago, one scientist undertook a fresh lamination of the widely-held assumption about the impossibility of faster-than-light travel, and discovered that it is flawed. In 1994, physicist Miguel Alcubierre

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introduced an imaginative approach to superluminal interstellar flight which surprisingly and importantly does not violate Einsteins Theory of Relativity. Simply put, Alcubierre contends that faster-than-light travel is achievable through the technological manipulation of spacetime itself.

Spacetime is merely the integration of our three-dimensional universe with the dimension of time. Einstein discovered that this conceptual unification is necessary if one wishes to accurately describe the large-scale functioning of the cosmos. He also found that spacetime is not rigid, but elastic, and becomes distorted, or warped, in the vicinity of large bodies, such as stars. Similarly, Alcubierre's own theory of FTL travel advocates the *artificial* distortion of spacetime—expanding it behind a spaceship and contracting it in front—to achieve superluminal velocities.

Taking his cue from the *Star Trek* series, Alcubierre refers to his radical travel mode as "warp drive." As we shall see, there remain monumental problems associated with this proposal which have yet to be resolved, leading some to believe that it will never realized. Nevertheless, a growing number of physicists have already endorsed or refined Alcubierre's warp drive model, hailing it as a profound insight with revolutionary consequences. In fact, some believe that it may ultimately be proven to be that rarity of rarities: a true paradigm-shift.

So, exactly what is Alcubierre proposing? His paper, "The Warp Drive: Hyperfast Travel Within General Relativity", was published in the May 1994 issue of the journal *Classical and Quantum Gravity* and is highly technical in nature. Therefore, as presented, his thesis is virtually inaccessible to all but those with a firm grasp of advanced physics and complex mathematics. Fortunately, however, Alcubierre also succinctly outlines and summarizes, in plain English, the thrust of his ideas. In the "abstract" which precedes the body of his argument, Alcubierre states:

"It is shown how, within the framework of general relativity and without the introduction of wormholes, it is possible to modify a spacetime in a way that allows a spaceship to travel with an arbitrarily large speed. By a purely local expansion of spacetime behind the spaceship and an opposite contraction in front of it, motion faster than the speed of light as seen by observers outside the disturbed region is possible. I he resulting distortion is

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reminiscent of the ‘warp drive’ of science fiction. However, just as it happens with wormholes, exotic matter will be needed in order to generate a distortion of spacetime like the one discussed here.[1]

(Wormholes are theoretical shortcuts through spacetime; exotic matter will be discussed shortly.)

Alcubierre later expands upon this introduction, stating, “… one can use an expansion of spacetime to move away from some object at an arbitrarily large speed. In the same way, one can use a contraction of spacetime to approach an object at any speed,” and further notes, “In this way, [a] spaceship will be pushed away from the Earth and pulled towards a distant star by spacetime itself. One can then invert the process to come back to Earth, taking an arbitrarily small time to complete the round trip.”[2]

Astronomer and science writer David Darling has explained the Alcubierre warp drive model this way: “Alcubierre concluded that a warp drive would be feasible if matter could be arranged so as to expand the spacetime behind a starship (thus pushing the departure point many light-years back) and contract the spacetime in front (bringing the destination closer), while leaving the starship itself in a locally flat region of spacetime bounded by a ‘warp bubble’ that lay between the two distortions. The ship would then surf along in its bubble at an arbitrarily high velocity, pushed forward by the expansion of space at its rear and the contraction of space in front. It could travel faster than light without breaking any physical law because, with respect to the spacetime in its warp bubble, it would be at rest.”[3]

In other words, if one can locally distort, by technological means, the existing structure of spacetime, expanding it behind a spaceship and contracting it in front, then that spaceship—at least to an observer positioned outside the warp bubble surrounding it—will effectively move faster than the speed of light. And, as difficult as it may be for some to envision, at the same time, the spaceship would be—from the point of view of the astronauts on board—stationary.

All of this is admittedly mind-bending, and will probably be difficult for most non-physicists to immediately grasp. Nevertheless, what Alcubierre has discovered is a theoretical method of faster-than-light travel which is entirely consistent with the principles enunciated in Einstein’s work. In doing so, he

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has proved that previous assumptions about the supposed impossibility of faster-than-light travel were erroneous. For this reason alone, his proposal may be considered as a genuine breakthrough in scientific thought.

Importantly, because the spaceship within Alcubierre's warp bubble is actually at rest—relative to the spacetime also present within the bubble—his model eliminates one inherent problem for those who might wish to engage in traditionally-conceived ultra-high velocity travel: time-dilation.

This bizarre aspect of relativity, which has been experimentally verified, has dire consequences for those traveling at great velocities for extended periods of time. Basically, time-dilation means that time slows down for any object not at rest. The faster the object is traveling, the slower time moves. This principle applies to all moving objects but really only becomes an issue at ultra-high velocities. For example, astronauts on board a spaceship traveling at near-light speed to another solar system would age significantly slower, relative to the rest of humanity back on Earth. Because of this inherent time-differential, when the astronauts returned home, not much older, they would find those they left behind were long dead. Depending on the distance they had traveled, centuries or eons would have passed on Earth. (This principle would obviously also apply to alien astronauts engaged in non-warp interstellar travel.)

But again, in Alcubierre's warp drive model, time-dilation is simply not a factor. Because the spaceship within the warp bubble is literally at rest, relative to its own spacetime, those on board are also at rest. Therefore, they would be immune to all relativistic effects, including time-dilation, which were previously assumed to be inescapable consequences for those traveling at ultra-high velocities.

In essence, Alcubierre's model creates a situation where time would pass for those on board a spaceship traveling at superluminal speeds at the same rate as it did for those outside the warp bubble in which the ship is imbedded. Therefore, astronauts of the future could theoretically travel to distant solar systems, in an amazingly short period of time, and return to Earth without being centuries younger than those they left behind.

Another immensely beneficial attribute associated with Alcubierre's warp drive model is the total absence of inertial forces. This means that those

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aboard the spaceship would feel absolutely no sense of movement as they hurtled through the galaxy at unimaginable speeds. Therefore, the enormous accelerations and decelerations which one might reasonably associate with warp travel would actually be non-existent. Why? Because, once again, the spaceship would literally be stationary within the warp bubble.

To summarize, Alcubierre's warp drive model permits—at a single stroke—superluminal travel with no time-dilation and no adverse motion-related effects. In theory, it represents a truly revolutionary approach to practicable interstellar travel—one that was completely unimagined by scientists just a decade ago.

However, if all of this sounds too good to be true, there remain—as Alcubierre himself has noted—formidable obstacles which first must be overcome before his model can be developed and exploited. For example, there is the problem of the power source. In *Star Trek*, as its fans are aware, rare and mysterious "di-lithium crystals" are used to produce warp velocities. In Alcubierre's model, so-called "exotic matter" is required. (Exotic matter is also referred to as "negative mass" or "negative energy density.") Although the existence of this strange stuff has long been postulated by physicists and cosmologists—who have incorporated it into theories relating to the behavior of the early universe, as well as the structure of wormholes—-the fact remains that exotic matter has yet to be detected in space.

Therefore, at the moment, the catalyst necessary for the technological distortion of spacetime in Alcubierre's warp drive model remains an uncertain, and possibly unavailable commodity.

However, if exotic matter remains elusive on the cosmic scale, in the laboratory, it is now widely believed to account for the so-called Casimir Effect. Quantum physics contends that the universe is filled with countless, extremely minute particles which are constantly in flux—going from a physical to a "virtual" state, and back again—billions of times a second. The energy fluctuations associated with these incessant transformations are collectively called "vacuum energy" or "zero point energy".

In 1948, physicist Hendrik Casimir proposed that the existence of this universal energy could be proved by placing two conducting plates extremely close to one another—thereby creating a space smaller than that required for

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the energy fluctuations to occur. If zero point energy is real, said Casimir, the pressure it exerts outside the plates will be greater than that between them, causing them to press together. This result was experimentally confirmed by Dr. Steve Lamoreaux in 1997, thereby proving the existence of zero point energy.

Most importantly for our discussion, Lamoreaux' experiment seems to have proved that negative energy density—exotic matter—exists in the space between the plates. Of course, the quantities involved are minuscule, and not remotely sufficient to produce a localized distortion of spacetime. Nevertheless, the fundamental existence of exotic matter now appears to be established.

As for the proposed warp drive, Alcubierre's own calculations revealed that, even if exotic matter is discovered in space, immense quantities would be required for its operation. However, this original estimate was dramatically revised in 1999, when Dutch physicist Chris Van Den Broeck demonstrated that the amount of exotic matter necessary to achieve superluminal travel would be far lower than Alcubierre's calculations first suggested. Even so, the estimated energy required to make warp drive a reality is still astronomical—equivalent to a few solar masses—which simply means the amount of energy contained in the Sun's mass, using Einstein's equation, E=mc2. Obviously, the technology necessary to beyond those which can be harnessed by mankind at the moment.

Moreover, there is another problem involving exotic matter. Aside from the amount needed for warp drive, there is also the necessity of segregating it from the surrounding, undistorted regions of spacetime. Dr. Chris Hillman notes, "… the Alcubierre and [Van Den] Broeck spacetimes require huge amounts of isolated negative energy density (in the walls of the bubble) with no regions of positive energy density anywhere in sight, much less 'flanking' the negative energy density regions."[4]

Hillman acknowledges the apparent existence of negative energy density demonstrated by the Casimir Effect, but says, "known ways of getting 'exotic matter' don't enable one to concentrate the stuff in an isolated region, away from 'overcompensating' amounts of ordinary matter/fields. But such apparently illegal concentrations of isolated negative energy density are

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apparently required simply to create an Alcubierre type warp bubble. (Never mind persuading it to move off in some direction.)"[5]

There are other problems with Alcubierre's warp drive as well. Dr John G. Cramer, a physicist at the University of Washington, notes that in the proposed model, "there would be no causal connection between the inside and outside of the warp bubble, making it impossible to steer, see where you are going, or to turn it on and off."[6]

Cosmologist Marcello Ribeiro, of the University of Brazil, echoes this concern: "The front of [Alcubierre's] bubble sits beyond our horizon, meaning that we may not have connection with this portion of spacetime. In other words, we cannot control the bubble, which would be something like driving a [speeding] car… without being able to see the road in front of you and having no wheels."[7]

Several theorists have attempted to address these unresolved issues. In July 2002, the journal *General Relativity and Quantum Cosmology* published a paper by C.B. Hart et al, titled, "On the Problems of Hazardous Matter and Radiation at Faster than Light Speeds in the Warp Drive Space-time."[8] The paper's authors devised an ingenious modification of Van Den Broeck's warp bubble which, they asserted, would not only permit forward visibility and controlled steering, but would also protect the crew of the spaceship from on-rushing matter and dangerous radiation. Moreover, it would permit communication with the those outside the warp bubble.

However, although this paper initially seemed to provide promising solutions to several of the problems associated with warp drive, some of those who contributed to it later repudiated their conclusions. For example, physicist Ronald Held has reversed himself and now believes that the "forward horizon" problem remains unsolved, meaning that the pilots of a warp-driven spaceship would indeed be driving blind.

Moreover, another contributor to the paper, mathematician Fernando Loup, is now of the opinion that—contrary to what the paper asserts—cosmic objects in the spaceship's path, such as asteroids, planets and stars, would continue to pose a threat to the astronauts aboard. Loup is now convinced that warp drive is essentially unfeasible, and instead proposes an alternate approach to faster-than-light travel known as "hyperdrive." This concept will

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be discussed at length shortly.

One notable physicist who continues to endorse the validity of the warp drive is Dr. Hal Puthoff. Perhaps more importantly, Puthoff believes that the Alcubierre model, and variations of it, represent only one technological approach to achieving faster-than-light velocities.

Who is Puthoff? Quoting from one published biography, "Dr. Harold E. Puthoff is Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Austin. A theoretical and experimental physicist specializing in fundamental electrodynamics, his research ranges from theoretical studies of quantum vacuum states as they apply to the stability of matter, gravitation, cosmology and energy research, to laboratory studies of innovative approaches to energy generation. A graduate of Stanford University in 1967, he has published over 30 technical papers in the areas of electron-beam devices, lasers and quantum zero-point-energy effects, has patents issued and pending in the laser, communications, and energy fields, and is co-author of a textbook, *Fundamentals of Quantum Electronics*...Puthoff regularly serves various government agencies, the Executive Branch and Congress as consultant on leading-edge technologies and future technology trends..."[9]

In 1996, Puthoff published a paper in the journal *Physics Essays* titled, SETI, the Velocity-of-Light Limitation, and the Alcubierre Warp Drive: An Integrating Overview." In the abstract, Puthoff writes:

"In SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) conventional wisdom has it that the probability of direct contact by interstellar travel is vanishingly small due to the enormous distances involved, coupled with the velocity-of-light limitation. Alcubierre's recent 'warp drive' analysis... within the context of general relativistic dynamics, however, indicates the naivete of this assumption. We show here that Alcubierre's result is a particular case of a broad, general approach that might loosely be called 'metric engineering,' the details of which provide yet further support for the concept that reduced-time interstellar travel..."[10]

In other words, Alcubierre's model for FTL travel may well be only one of several approaches to faster-than-light travel, utilizing the technological

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manipulation of spacetime. On this, Puthoff is emphatic, "...rejection of the concept of hyperfast (superluminal) travel is not justified when one takes into account the possibility of engineered dynamic space-times within the context of general relativity."[11] Moreover, Puthoff believes that such cosmic engineering—in one form or another—is the probable method by which practicable interstellar travel may be realized. One alternate approach to achieving superluminal velocities involves "vacuum engineering" which, according to Puthoff, can theoretically be used to create "additional space-times with desired properties" for faster-than-light travel.[12]

Puthoff concludes his 1996 paper by stating: "Therefore, the proper conclusion to be drawn by consideration of engineered metric/vacuum-energy effects is that, with sufficient technological means...travel at speeds exceeding the conventional velocity of light could occur without the violation of fundamental physical laws. And, we might add, this could in principle be done without recourse to concepts as extreme as wormhole traversal. (However, clearly, exotic matter/field states, e.g., macroscopic Casimir-like negative-energy-density vacuum states, would be required.) As a result, the possibility of reduced-time interstellar travel, either by advanced extraterrestrial civilizations at present or ourselves in the future, is not fundamentally constrained by physical principles."[13]

Also implicit in Puthoff's paper is the idea that if warp drive, or something like it, can eventually be engineered by humans, there will be no point in our sending radio signals into space to attempt to achieve interplanetary contact. We can just *travel* to other worlds instead. Similarly, if superluminal travel is indeed achievable—in one form or another—then it is almost certainly available to the galaxy's more advanced races Therefore, highly-evolved alien civilizations would not waste their time on radio communication either. Radio waves, after all, travel at the speed of light and can go no faster. Significant-to-vast periods of time would be required just to send a one-way transmission to another world, let alone the time it would take to reply. No, radio wave-communication on the interstellar scale is inherently impractical. Only those quasi-advanced worlds stuck in their pre-warp era would ever bother with it. Consequently, it is likely that if we ever do detect intelligently-transmitted signals from another planet, they will be from a civilization that was—at least at the time they transmitted—approximately as advanced as

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ours.

This is not to say, however, that the detection of radio, or other, signals from another planet would be an unimportant development on Earth. On the contrary, it would be enormously, almost unimaginably important. And, this still may be the means by which humans first learn, unequivocally, that we are not alone in the galaxy. As such, radio "contact" with a civilization in another solar system would be a dramatic, historical breakthrough, having far-reaching consequences.

It is beyond the scope of this book to delve more extensively into the theoretical and technical complexities of warp drive. (I think some of my readers just said, "Thank God!") Anyway, suffice it to say that the model proposed by Miguel Alcubierre has been diligently examined by numerous physicists and mathematicians since its publication in 1994. The result has been the periodic introduction of other models, each of which attempted to address various problems inherent in earlier versions. While this evolutionary process has successfully resolved many of the predicted obstacles and limitations associated with the concept of superluminal travel, others remain.

Nevertheless, as a physics-savvy friend of mine correctly notes, "Anything is possible unless it is forbidden. FTL travel by brute rocket propulsion is forbidden. But FTL travel by manipulation of space-time is not forbidden by physics at our present level of understanding."

Nobody ever said that the Theory of Relativity, or vacuum energy physics, was child's play. Unless you are a physicist, or a layperson with an in-depth knowledge of these fields, you have probably had some degree of difficulty following the discussion presented in this chapter. I myself have had to read and re-read the abstracts of the papers cited herein just to understand the basic premises presented in them. As for understanding the underlying mathematics, well, I'll get back to you on that.

In any case, the key point is this: Rather recently, entrenched scientific assumptions about the impossibility of practicable interstellar exploration have begun to challenged by a handful of visionary physicists and mathematicians. Given that it is well-established science—viewed in a new way—which provides the framework for these individuals' intellectual explorations, it is conceivable that they may indeed be laying the foundation

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for a quantum leap in human achievement and understanding.

There remains, of course, substantial disagreement within the larger community of specialists—cosmologists, astronomers, and physicists—as to the ultimate feasibility of superluminal travel. Admittedly, enormous obstacles must first be overcome if warp drive is to ever emerge as an accessible tool for humans. However, the simple fact that it is finally being considered as a potentially achievable feat is not insignificant.

Obviously, all of these ideas are for the moment speculative. But it may well be that Alcubierre has in fact presented humankind with an insight which will one day result in a dramatic paradigm-shift. If so, it will not only permit us to explore space in a manner previously believed to be impossible, it may ultimately solve the mystery of the origin and nature of UFOs.

Hyperspace

There have been still other developments in theoretical physics which may also provide insight into the UFO phenomenon. In addition to the previously mentioned, technologically-based approaches to viable interstellar trekking, exciting advances in fundamental cosmological theory are emerging to challenge current notions about how the universe is designed and how it functions.

Important for our discussion is the fact that these proposals theoretically permit all manner of strange and wonderful interactions between far-flung worlds in ways not envisioned or permitted by traditional physics and astronomy. Consequently, they potentially have a direct bearing on the question of whether or not UFOs are likely to be alien spacecraft.

These new theories do not dispense with Einstein's universe of four-dimensional spacetime, but propose that it may only be a component of a larger, multi-dimensional reality, dubbed "Hyperspace".

And so, exciting new concepts—the manipulation of the fabric of spacetime to achieve superluminal velocities, as well as the integration of that fabric into a higher-dimensional reality—have prompted a growing number of scientists to question long-held assumptions which would have prohibited practicable interstellar travel. Although it will be undoubtedly some time

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before the great majority of physicists and astronomers seriously consider the UFO phenomenon as a potential manifestation of the new ideas now unfolding, the fact that "legitimate" science is now openly advancing such previously taboo concepts as faster-than-light travel, time travel, and multidimensional reality, may ultimately hasten the process.

If one or more of them are ultimately proven to have merit, then travel between solar systems may be far more probable, and eventually become a reality for humans. And, of course, such journeys may already be a routine activity for other, more-advanced civilizations elsewhere in the galaxy who long ago solved the problems inherent in interstellar travel.

The Hyperdrive

If warp drive represents an ambitious approach to faster-than-light travel, hyperdrive is truly audacious. Where warp drive proposes the artificial distortion of spacetime—a spectacular technical challenge in itself—hyperdrive requires that a spaceship temporarily exits spacetime and enters Hyperspace to achieve effective superluminal velocities.

For those not familiar with recently-proposed models of the cosmos, this concept might appear to be complete gibberish. Nevertheless, many physicists, cosmologists, and mathematicians now consider Hyperspace to be an integral part of the universe. In fact, diverse scientific inquiries are currently underway to verify its existence, determine its properties, and assess its impact (if any) on spacetime and the known laws of physics.

To the hyperdrive theorist, this mode of travel is simple in principle but profound in its consequences. In essence, it works like this: First, a technological manipulation of the boundary between spacetime and Hyperspace creates a hole, or passage, into the higher-dimensional realm. A spaceship traveling at slower-than-light velocities approaches this hole and moves through it with no adverse consequences for its crew.

Upon entering Hyperspace, the spaceship continues to travel at subluminal velocities. However, because of the fundamental arrangement of Hyperspace, as it interfaces with spacetime, the ship is *effectively* moving at superluminal velocities—from the perspective of an observer anywhere in spacetime. This principle is rather difficult to visualize, and impossible to defend without the

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use of higher mathematics. Nevertheless, if Hyperspace exists—as a growing number of physicists believe—then hyperdrive is theoretically possible.

If these theorists are correct, then the use of hyperspace as a short-cut across the universe, may be the missing piece of the puzzle that would permit UFOs—if they are indeed extraterrestrial—to get "from there to here" with such seeming ease and frequency.

To further illustrate what is being proposed, a spaceship leaves one location in spacetime, traverses Hyperspace for a few minutes or hours, and re-enters spacetime at another location which is very distant from the point at which it exited. Because a vast distance in spacetime has been crossed in a short period of time, the net effect is that the spaceship traveled faster-than-light.

Moreover, because the spaceship, from its perspective, never surpassed subluminal velocities, time-dilation and other Relativistic effects would not be present for the crew. In other words, upon returning to their home world they would have aged at essentially the same rate as those they left behind.

Additionally, because Hyperspace has no physical aspect to it, spacetime-related obstacles such as radiation, asteroids, planets, and stars would not be present to impede the hyper-driven spaceship's progress, or create potentially hazardous situations for the crew. Although some warp drive models theoretically eliminate these obstacles as well, by the manner in which spacetime is manipulated, the problem is by definition non-existent in hyperdrive travel.

One hyperdrive theorist, mathematician Fernando Loup, has proposed an intriguing method to test both the existence of hyperspace, and the feasibility of utilizing it to travel around the universe with relative ease. He notes that, according to Einstein's theory of spacetime, known to physicists as the Standard Model, predicts that higher dimensions—if they do indeed exist—are so tiny that even subatomic particles can not enter them. Consequently, something larger, such as a spaceship, can not either.

However, Loup asks whether it might be possible to discover a physical process by which to enlarge the radius of the Extra Dimension—from 10 31 meters to 200 meters—to permit the passage of a spaceship through it. In 2003, in two papers published in the peer-review journal *General Relativity*

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and Gravitation, he proposes using a high-energy beam to do just that, in effect blasting out of spacetime and into hyperspace.[14, 15]

If one is tempted to think that all of this talk about extra dimension' and extra-dimensional space travel is just too radical for general scientific acceptance, consider the article, “Take a Leap into Hyperspace”, published in the January 5, 2006 issue of *New Scientist* magazine.[16] It notes that the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics had recently awarded a prize to a paper written by Walter Dröscher and Jochem Häuser, in which they propose the construction of a hyperdrive spacecraft, based on their modification of the theories of a somewhat obscure German physicist, Dr. Burkhard Heim, who first postulated a type of higher-dimensional reality over 50 years ago.

According to the article, in 1964, German relativity theorist Pascual Jordan, a member of the Nobel committee, informed Heim that experimental verification of his hyperdrive design would make him a candidate for the highly-coveted prize. The article further notes that Roger Lenard, a space propulsion researcher at Sandia National Laboratories, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has expressed a tentative interest in testing the hyperdrive design proposed by Dröscher and Häuser, once certain aspects of their model have been clarified. The article says, in part:

Heim began to explore the hyperdrive propulsion concept in the 1950s as a spin-off from his attempts to heal the biggest divide in physics: the rift between quantum mechanics and Einsteins general theory of relativity…

Heim began to rewrite the equations of general relativity in a quantum framework. He drew on Einstein’s idea that the gravitational force emerges from the dimensions of space and time, but suggested that all fundamental forces, including electromagnetism, might emerge from a new, different set of dimensions…

In Heim’s view of space and time... it is possible to convert electromagnetic energy into gravitational and back again, and speculated that a rotating

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magnetic field could reduce the influence of gravity on a spacecraft enough for it to take off.

Dröscher insists, 'Our theory is not about anti-gravity. It's about completely new fields with new properties,' he says. And he and Häuser have suggested an experiment to prove it.

This will require a huge rotating ring placed above a superconducting coil to create an intense magnetic field. With a large enough current in the coil, and a large enough magnetic field, Dröscher claims the electromagnetic force can reduce the gravitational pull on the ring to the point where it floats free…

Dröscher is hazy about the details, but he suggests that a spacecraft fitted with a coil and ring could be propelled into a multidimensional hyperspace. Here the constants of nature could be different, and even the speed of light could be several times faster than we experience. If this happens, it would be possible to reach Mars in less than 3 hours and a star 11 light years away in only 80 days... So is this all fanciful nonsense, or a revolution in the making? [17]

I unreservedly recommend this article to technically-inclined individuals who seek further information regarding the serious scientific attention currently being directed toward hyperdrive theory.

In summary, while there are at present various proposed approaches to building a hyperdrive, an actual working model, which might test the reality of the principle, remains well beyond reach for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, what I find most intriguing about all of this is that professional scientists and mathematicians are finally addressing the possibility of hyperspace and hyperdrives in papers published in peer- review journals. After a century of promoting Einsteins light-limit dictum as unassailable cosmic truth—rather than the important but incremental step in human knowledge it actually is—physicists, mathematicians, and others are finally thinking outside of the four-dimensional box of spacetime. One wonders if

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other scientists, on other worlds, took that revolutionary leap long ago. In my view, the available evidence for UFOs—both empirical and anecdotal—suggests this is indeed the case.

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29. Lucky, So Far

Okay, back to Earth, and back to the same old problem: nukes. While much has changed for the better over the last several years regarding the nuclear arms race, some developments sound distressingly familiar and are perhaps much more ominous than the average person realizes. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, many in the Western world assumed the perpetual threat of all-out nuclear war between the superpowers—which had existed since the 1950s—was finally receding into the shadows of history. There were, after all, very encouraging signs early on: one of the first endeavors jointly undertaken by the United States and the new Russian Federation, in 1993, was the downsizing of nuclear arsenals under the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II).

The treaty's key provision prohibited the use of Multiple Independently-targeted Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs) on ICBMs. Henceforth, both countries agreed, there would only be one warhead on each deployed missile. This in itself would result in a very significant reduction in the number of nukes in the field, ready for launch. Furthermore, in 1994, the U.S. and Russia agreed to suspend the targeting of each other with nuclear missiles. The action was essentially symbolic and its benefits chiefly psychological, given that the missiles can be re-targeted in a matter of a few minutes. But after decades of mutual animosity, it was a welcomed development nonetheless.

However, relations between the U.S. and Russia soon began to unravel. Although the START II treaty was ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1996, it was never implemented because the Russian parliament, or Duma, kept postponing its own ratification process to protest American military actions in Iraq and Kosovo, as well as the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) into formerly Soviet-block countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria. During the Cold War, NATO served as an anti-communist bulwark, binding together the Western nations against the expansionist policies of the Soviet Union. Once the old communist regimes in Eastern Europe began falling like dominoes in the early 1990s, the U.S. quickly began making overtures to the new, Western- leaning governments, enticing them to join the organization. Perhaps understandably, Russia

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viewed these moves with great suspicion and even outright hostility, fearing new American allies closer to, or directly on, its borders. From the Kremlin's point-of-view, this unwelcomed development might prove extremely dangerous to Russia in any future global conflict.

Tensions were further exacerbated in 2002, when the U.S. withdrew from the U.S./Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, thus paving the way for the potential deployment of a national anti-ballistic missile system, as well as another one in Eastern Europe. The latter is ostensibly intended as a hedge against a possible Iranian attack on Europe, if and when that country acquires nukes. Russia quickly challenged the idea and accused the U.S. of having plans to use the proposed anti-missile system against their own nuclear missiles, should some future conflict ever erupt. On June 14, 2002, one day after the U.S. withdrew from the ABM Treaty, the Russian government angrily announced that it would no longer comply with the provisions of the START II Treaty. Consequently, both countries continue to deploy multiple warheads on ICBMs and submarine-based SLBMs, and Russia has spent the last few years upgrading its delivery systems. One April 2004 Russian press report reads:

Mobile-Launched, BMD-Resistant

Topol-M ICBM Ready by 2006

One week after Russia test launched a mobile-launched Topol-M ICBM, Yury Solomonov, the director of the Moscow Institute of Heat Technology said in an interview with the ITAR-TASS news agency that the mobile launched version would be ready for deployment by 2006. The mobile launch capability serves the purpose of making it difficult for the United States to know where Russia's missiles are at any given time, and thus make it more difficult to defend against them.

BBC also reports that on April 26 Radio Mayak in Moscow carried a description of the Topol-M's resistance to American missile defenses, part of which was the following:

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The Topol-M currently has a 60 percent chance of overcoming U.S. air defence systems and this will rise to 87 percent, partly because it is very hard to find the mobile launchers. They can travel, camouflaged from satellites, along ordinary roads so that a missile can be launched from any location while interception becomes considerably more difficult. In addition, each mobile- launched Topol-M will have from four to six nuclear warheads as well as several dummy targets.[1]

More recently, an *Associated Press* (*AP*) story, published in May 2007, provided an update on the increasingly worrisome arms race between the U.S. and Russia. Titled, "Russia Test-Launches New Intercontinental Ballistic Missile", the article noted that the new ICBM could carry multiple warheads and was designed to penetrate any anti-missile defense network. AP also referenced a report in the Russian media which quoted First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov as saying, "As of today, Russia has new [missiles] that are capable of overcoming any existing or future missile defense systems. So in terms of defense and security, Russians can look calmly to the country's future..."[2]

Yes, comrades, er, citizens, now that your government has new, improved nuclear weapon systems, you can all be calm. Forgive me, dear reader, whatever your nationality, but I am extremely dubious about this contention, as you should be. Merely upgrading a nation's ability to fight a nuclear war does not enhance the security of that country's citizens, despite what one's government might claim to the contrary. In other words, merely possessing more sophisticated weapons does not make one more safe.

Moreover, as the article above illustrates, this principle applies equally to the proposed missile defense shield currently advocated by the U.S. Simply put, once a weapon or anti-weapon system is developed by one country, its adversary will find a way to neutralize it sooner or later, thereby effectively reinstating the previous level of vulnerability. Such is the history of warfare.

In any case, the current bottom-line is this: America and Russia are still armed to the teeth and there is no guarantee that those weapons will not be used at some point. The Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), signed in 2002, requires that the two countries reduce the number of

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operationally-deployed strategic warheads on each side to between 1700 and 2200 by the year 2012. Although this is far lower than the number of deployed nukes during the height of the Cold War, the reduced arsenals mandated by SORT nevertheless remain a very real, ongoing threat to humanity. Furthermore, due to the introduction of ballistic submarines, which lie undetected off U.S. and Russian coastlines, the total time between missile launch and massive destruction has been reduced to less than ten minutes.

"The concern I and many others have about the continuing and still-precarious nuclear stand-off between the U.S. and Russia has long been enunciated by the respected *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*. First published in 1945, at the dawn of the Nuclear Age, the bulletin has been a reliable source of information on the arms race, as well as a strong advocate of nuclear disarmament. It currently features articles such as, "The U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex: Pushing For a New Production Capability", which notes, "While prominent members of the U.S. policy community make public calls for disarmament, Los Alamos National Laboratory continues to quietly pursue the infrastructure necessary to build the next generation of nuclear weapons."[3]

The bulletin's Executive Director and Publisher, Kennette Benedict, observes that although world attention has been focused in recent years on terrorists armed with nukes, the nuclear aspirations of Iran and North Korea, and a possible nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan, the real threat lies elsewhere. Benedict says, "Those are not the countries I would worry about. Those are not the [delivery] systems I would worry about. Those are not the weapons I would worry about. I think the elephant in the room is still the fact that Russia and the U.S. have not stood down from their Cold War launch-readiness… The number of weapons we have is the equivalent of 80,000 Hiroshima bombs. The bomb [dropped] on Hiroshima killed 100,000 people. We've got 80,000 of those, so we could [theoretically] kill eight billion people. There are only six billion on the planet."[4]

Joseph Cirincione, an arms control analyst with the Center for American Progress, reinforces the point, "The Russians and the U.S. still have thousands of weapons, many of them ready to launch in 15 minutes or less. This is enough to destroy both countries and, in fact, the world... There are several ways a nuclear war could start in the next decade or so. The most

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likely is by accident—one side, misinterpreting the actions of the other, thinks they've launched a nuclear attack and then responds in kind..."[5]

Weapons experts further note that the number of megaton-range explosions needed to cause grave, possibly irreparable damage to human civilization is far smaller than the number of nukes that both sides would actually employ during an all-out nuclear exchange. Indeed, although thousands of missile warheads and bombs still exist and can potentially be used, some believe that as few as 20 would be enough to do the deadly deed. Says Cirincione, "[If] you set off a large number of nuclear explosions, you are going to put into the atmosphere enough debris to block off the sun's light. This would last for years."[6] Global weather patterns would eventually disperse the dense shroud over the entire planet. One consequence of this aptly-named Nuclear Winter would be the long-term cessation of large- scale agriculture, resulting in massive starvation worldwide.

Physicist Michio Kaku thinks the number of nuclear explosions required to trigger this dire situation is somewhat higher, but nevertheless warns, "Only 100 megatons is enough to set off a conflagration: fire storms, soot going into the atmosphere, would destroy human civilization and perhaps humanity as we know it."[7]

One hundred megatons is but a fraction of the total explosive yield that would be unleashed during an all-out exchange between the U.S. and Russia. The potential detonation of some 4000 nuclear warheads and bombs—a realistic number, given the number of deployed weapons permitted by the SORT treaty—would result not only in the destruction of hundreds of millions of people and their property, but would also create a Nuclear Winter of almost inconceivable proportions, thereby ensuring the eventual deaths of several billion more humans over time.

Considering all of these facts, the Russian government's current approach to reassuring its citizens about their supposed security—by crowing over the latest improvements in its weapons systems—are thoroughly disingenuous because they evade discussing the still very real potential of a nuclear war with the West, as well as the consequences of such a war, which would be undeniably disastrous, not only for Russia but the entire world.

However, if one thinks that nuclear saber-rattling is strictly a Russian habit

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these days, think again. On January 22, 2008, the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, featured an article titled, "Pre-emptive Nuclear Strike a Key Option, NATO Told", which reported that senior military leaders and strategists from several Western countries had met to discuss a fundamental rethinking of NATO's nuclear weapons policy.[8] Those leaders, from the U.S., Britain, Germany, France and the Netherlands, called for a "grand strategy" to deal with new challenges, including global terrorism and nuclear proliferation, while insisting that, "the first use of nuclear weapons must remain in the quiver of escalation as the ultimate instrument to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction," because there exists "no realistic prospect of a nuclear-free world."[9]

Although this manifesto proposes Western responses to nuclear proliferation, the impending use of nukes by terrorists and radical governments—as well as *use of those weapons by the West itself*, in future crises involving dwindling energy and food—it is perhaps most notable for what it doesn't openly advocate, but nevertheless seems to imply. Even though there is no explicit mention of Russia per se, its authors are nevertheless recommending that the US/NATO/EU alliance not rule out a nuclear first-strike in a crisis where "the West's values and way of life arc-under threat."[10] Arguably, this rationale for the use of nukes is no different than the previous NATO mindset during the 50-year stand-off between the superpowers and their allies during the Cold War.

During that era, the assumptions underlying the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)—whereby both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. vowed to unleash *all* of their nukes if war broke out—basically kept each side too terrified to strike first. However, in the early 21st Century, with the great reduction in the level of deployed U.S. and Russian strategic weapons—from tens of thousands to "just" thousands—one could argue that each country, during some future crisis, might be tempted to believe it could survive a more limited (but basically full-scale) nuclear war. If so—and I will bet that some Pentagon planners and their counterparts in Moscow have already worked out the details of such a contingency plan—one must ask whether the probability of a first-strike, by one side or the other, will actually be greater in the future than it was during the Cold War era.

Such a war, whatever its scale, would still be MADness by any other name,

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with hundreds of millions dead worldwide and a planetary environment in ruins. Nevertheless, conceivably, the unthinkable may someday be thinkable, as least to the government leaders on each side, having been convinced by their advisors that nuclear war was inevitable and, therefore, should be launched first. After all, human history is replete with international crises during which claims were made that war was absolutely necessary, for one reason or another. Consequently, the most advanced weapons during that period were ultimately used by one or both adversaries, to increase their chances of victory. Of course, regardless of the winner, a claim of "victory" after an all-out nuclear war, would have a meaningless and horribly hollow ring.

Close Calls

While we can only speculate about which of the various still-unfolding international situations might lead to the premeditated or accidental use of nukes in the future, history already provides several concrete examples to illustrate the potential threat. The world was very, very lucky during the Cold War—far luckier than most people realize. In addition to the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, during which the U.S. and the Soviet Union threatened each other with the use of nuclear weapons to further their respective aims, several other, little-known near-disasters—each born of some improbable accident or dangerous misunderstanding—almost resulted in all-out nuclear war between the superpowers at one time or another. For a fairly comprehensive list of these close calls—at least those openly acknowledged by the U.S. government—I recommend the excellent article, "20 Mishaps That Might Have Started Accidental Nuclear War" by Alan F. Phillips, M.D.[11] Among the near-catastrophic incidents catalogued are the following:

The Computer Exercise Tape Mishap: At 8:50 a.m. on November 9, 1979, duty officers at four command centers (NORAD HQ, SAC Command Post, The Pentagon National Military Command Center, and the Alternate National Military Command Center) all saw on their displays a pattern showing a large number of Soviet Missiles in a full scale attack on the U.S.A. During the next six minutes emergency preparations for retaliation were made. A number of Air Force planes were launched, including the Presidents

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National Emergency Airborne Command Post, though without the President! The President had not been informed, perhaps because he could not be found.

No attempt was made to use the hot line either to ascertain the Soviet intentions or to tell the Soviets the reasons for U.S. actions. This seems to me to have been culpable negligence. The whole purpose of the 'Hot Line' was to prevent exactly the type of disaster that was threatening at that moment.

With commendable speed, NORAD was able to contact PAVE PAWS early warning radar and learn that no missiles had been reported. Also, the sensors on the satellites were functioning that day and had detected no missiles. In only six minutes the threat assessment conference was terminated.

The reason for the false alarm was an exercise tape running on the computer system. U.S. Senator Charles Percy happened to be in NORAD HQ at the time and is reported to have said there was absolute panic. A question was asked in Congress. The General Accounting Office conducted an investigation, and an off-site testing facility was constructed so that test tapes did not in the future have to be run on a system that could be in military operation.

The Faulty Computer Chip: The Warning displays at the Command Centers mentioned in the last episode included windows that normally showed 0000 ICBMs detected 0000 SLBMs detected. [However,] at 2:25 a.m. on June 3, 1980, these displays started showing various numbers of missiles detected, represented by 2's in place of one or more 0 's. Preparations for retaliation were instituted, including nuclear bomber crews staring their engines, launch of Pacific Commands Airborne Command Post, and readying of Minutemen missiles for launch. It was not difficult to assess that this was a false alarm because the numbers displayed were not rational.

While the cause of that false alarm was still being investigated three days later, the same thing happened and again preparations were made for retaliation. The cause was a single faulty chip that was failing in a random fashion. The basic design of the system was faulty, allowing this single failure to cause a deceptive display at several command posts...

The Russian False Alarm: On January 25, 1995, the Russian early warning radars detected an unexpected missile launch near Spitzbergen [an

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island owned by Norway]. The estimated flight time to Moscow was five minutes. The Russian President, the Defense Minister and the Chief of Staff were informed. The early warning and the control and command center switched to combat mode. Within five minutes, the radars determined that the missiles impact would be outside the Russian borders.

The missile was Norwegian, and was launched for scientific measurements. On January 16, Norway had notified 35 countries including Russia that the launch was planned. Information had apparently reached the Russian Defense Ministry, but failed to reach the on-duty personnel of the early warning system.

When Dr. Phillips published his article in 1998, he was unaware of another extremely frightening close call which has only recently been revealed: On November 2, 1983, NATO commenced a command post exercise code-named “Able Archer”, which simulated a conflict escalation culminating in a nuclear exchange. The very realistic exercise was quickly reported to the Kremlin by its spies, causing the paranoid Soviet leadership to believe that an actual nuclear attack against the Soviet Union was imminent. The Soviet military immediately went to full alert and was ordered to prepare for a nuclear attack against the West. When the Able Archer war games ended without a real-world launching of nukes, the relieved Soviets stood down. Although the reasons underlying the Kremlin’s decision not to launch a pre-emptive strike remain unclear, the extreme seriousness of the situation at the time has now been acknowledged by both the U.S. and Russian governments.

The lesson to be learned from all of these potentially catastrophic near-misses is clear: Murphy's Law is still in effect. If things can go wrong, sooner or later they will. Mistakes happen, and will happen again, and misunderstandings are an integral part of international relationships. Although it has been nearly two decades since the world held its breath while watching the superpowers snarl at each other, the nuclear annihilation infrastructure which then threatened the whole planet, while diminished in size, remains intact. Consequently, thousands of nukes are capable of being unleashed in the blink of an eye, if the relative lull in East-West hostilities we currently enjoy should ever end.

Many historians and weapons experts have argued that the mere threat of

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nuclear war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War era actually kept it from happening, simply because the superpowers knew with grim certainty the Mutually Assured Destruction policy would make such a war suicidal for both countries, no matter who had started it. Therefore, according to this argument, the mere possession of tens of thousands of weapons by each side effectively assured that they would never be used.

Well, that's one way to look at it, and maybe the historians and weapons experts are correct. But I and a great many other people around the world continue to wonder whether that longstanding, mutually-held assumption was really enough insurance, decade after decade, against an all-out U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange. Expert opinion aside, another way to view the situation in which we humans presently find ourselves, in the ongoing Nuclear Age, is to say that we've been lucky so far. Our incredible good fortune may even last for decades to come—until that one, fateful day when our luck finally runs out. Perhaps that day will never arrive, but do we as a species really wish to continue gambling in this particular high-stakes game?

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30. Buzzing Bangor

As noted elsewhere, the United States military relies on a "triad" of nuclear weapons delivery modes. In the early 1960s, the long-range B- 52 bomber force was gradually augmented by both land-based ICBMs and nuclear-powered submarines carrying SLBMs—submarine-launched ballistic missiles. With the introduction of Polaris missiles, the U.S. Navy began selecting sites for support facilities. In 1962, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Bremerton, Washington, was designated as the nuclear missile submarine overhaul facility, while the nearby Bangor Naval Ammunition Depot was designated as the Polaris missile assembly facility. In 1973, Bangor was selected as the first base for submarines carrying the new, multiple nuclear warhead Trident missiles. The upgraded installation, known as Naval Submarine Base Bangor, became fully-operational in 1981. In 2004, the Navy announced the merger of SUBASE Bangor with Naval Station Bremerton. The new command was named Naval Base Kitsap.

According to globalsecurity.org, "Bangor is home to four of the 18 Ohio-class submarines that constitute the sea-based component of the strategic nuclear triad (ground and air being the other two). Each is capable of carrying 24 Trident II missiles, containing 192 independently- targeted warheads."[1] Within the sprawling Bangor complex is the Strategic Weapons Facility Pacific. This high-security site consists of dozens of hardened bunkers within which the Trident missiles' nuclear warheads are stored.

Not surprisingly, sightings of UFOs in the vicinity of Bangor/ Bremerton/Kitsap are not uncommon. This chapter contains several independent reports—some corrected for grammar and spelling—submitted over the years to the National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC). Among the most significant was the incident occurring on the evening of April 22, 1998, as reported by civilian Larry Swanson. Swanson's house is less than a quarter-mile from the northeast corner of the Bangor base. At around 9:22 p.m., he observed a disc-shaped UFO fly silently from north to south at low altitude over the center of the base, where the nuclear weapons storage facility is located. At one point, the disc tilted slightly, allowing Swanson to observe its underside more clearly, before it slowly glided out of sight.

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The following day, Swanson notified NUFORC, then based in nearby Seattle. In his initial sighting report, he wrote,

Entire bottom of disk was glowing except for center circular area approximately 30% of the diameter. Total diameter approximately 100 feet. Object 300-400 feet off ground moving slowly and silently directly over Bangor Submarine Base. Distance from me approx 3/4 mile.

The glow on the bottom of disk was totally white... I seemed to be seeing only the bottom of the disk. Later during same evening (11:15 newscast) on Seattle Television (King 5) there were reports of strange green flashes of light in the sky at 9:15 p.m. to the west of Seattle. This was approximately the same time [of my sighting]... yet I saw no flashes...only the disk. There was no sound from the disk. It did appear to be descending slightly as it moved from a Northerly to a South Westerly direction across Bangor Submarine Base. I was the only observer in my household. I am 54 years old and an Information Systems Analyst with Electronic Data Systems in Poulsbo, and am also a retired government (U.S. Navy) computer analyst.[2]

Peter Davenport, director of NUFORC, later interviewed Swanson. He also investigated UFO sighting reports made by other witnesses, at different locations, on the same night. Apparently, two persons driving some 140 miles north of Bangor, in southern British Columbia, also saw the same disc—or, at least, another one having the same appearance—approximately two minutes before Swanson's own sighting at the submarine base. Davenport writes,

I was intrigued by the report of an anomalous object with a hole in its center. NUFORC has received a number of reports which are reminiscent of that format. Perhaps the most dramatic case was an object, first witnessed by a former Canadian F-104 pilot at 21:20 hours on April 22, 1998, just south of Whistler, B.C., as he and his girlfriend drove south to Vancouver. It flew directly over their vehicle, as they drove south. The object reportedly was imbedded in a 'cloud' of green light, and it was moving so fast that the

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witnesses observed it for only a few seconds before it disappeared to the south over the horizon. [Other observers located further south reported that] the object suddenly stopped over Puget Sound, where it could be seen by witnesses some 30-40 miles away. An estimated 5-10 seconds after this initial stop, it 'jumped' to another location, and hovered for a second short period of time, before suddenly accelerating and streaking generally to the south. Many witnesses in the Seattle area reported the object, which must have been some 30 miles to the west of their locations.

The only witness of record to note the 'ring' shape to the object was a retired U.S. Navy software/computer engineer, [Swanson] who witnessed the object from his home, located on the northeast corner of the Bangor Submarine Base on the west side of Puget Sound. He reported that the object, which he estimated to have been 100-120 feet in diameter, flew directly over what is referred to as the 'limited area' of the base, an apparent euphemism for the hundreds [sic] of underground concrete bunkers where 'military assets' are stored.

The engineer reported that the disc's outer flange was the color of a white fluorescent light, and the center was TOTALLY black. He described the center dark portion by stating that it was like 'looking into space.'

... The U. S. Navy, I am told through back channels, reacted aggressively to what it assumed was an incursion into the area where they store nuclear weapons. Witnesses suggest that both helicopters and jet fighters were launched out of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, located to the north of Bangor, although I have not been able to document the response. I have reason to believe that the Navy may have videotaped the object with low-light security cameras.

The object then ascended, accelerated, and 'shot' south, where it was seen by multiple witnesses on Interstate 5, just north of Portland and Vancouver, WA. It hovered over the highway, bathing it in a peculiar green light, before it

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shot east, over the Cascade Mountains, where it was seen by a deputy sheriff in Yakima, WA. He reported that it was traveling north (!) At a blistering pace and it suddenly changed from green to blue in color during his brief observation of the object. When I approached the (civilian) public affairs officer at Bangor, he said I would be forbidden to speak with any member of the base. Jan Aldrich pursued the case some while later, submitted a FOIA request to Bangor base, and was told that the Navy knew nothing about the case.[3]

When I interviewed Swanson in 2008, to obtain a few more details about his sighting, he told me he had been looking due west out a second- story window when he saw the UFO. He further said, "The object's [apparent] size was larger than a silver dollar held at arm's length—maybe one-and-half times that size—and it was moving at maybe 50-60 miles per hour." Swanson added, "It was almost dark but not quite. I could still see the tree line below the object and the Olympic Mountains in the distance. I used the trees it flew over to estimate its distance. I am certain that the object was not over the Hood Canal, which is [the western boundary] of the Bangor base. It was much closer to me than that, so it had to be over the base itself."

Swanson lives on Clear Creek Road, is just outside the eastern boundary of the Bangor Base. After speaking with him, I used Google Earth and Map Quest to determine the location of his house relative to the weapons bunkers. If the disc had been three-quarters of a mile distant, as Swanson estimated, it would have been just west of the nuclear weapons bunker complex, perhaps by some two-tenths of a mile, flying roughly parallel with the WSA's north/south axis. Moreover, because the huge complex is some three miles long—extending both north and south of Swanson' house—its likely the UFO would have been moving along the extended row of bunkers during virtually the entire sighting.

NUFORC ultimately received 10 separate sighting reports from persons living in Washington state, Oregon, or British Columbia, who had observed a UFO on the same evening as Swanson's sighting at Bangor. One sighting witness wrote,

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[On April 22, 1998, at 9:30 p.m., we saw an] oval light [that] was blue/green and very bright. We were driving west on Cascade Park Drive when we saw the light fly from north to south toward Portland, Oregon. It was very fast. We didn't report it at first because we thought it was ball lightning.

I have a degree from the University of Hawaii. My husband has his degree from St. Leo College. I have studied Astronomy extensively as an undergraduate. My husband is an Army officer. There was one object seen [and it] seemed distant. Maybe a few miles away in the sky. At that distance I would suspect the size to be about that of a large airplane or larger. It was an elongated oval. The oval was glowing brightly with blue/green color...[4]

Around that time, what was probably the same UFO was reported near Oakville, some 70 miles southwest of the Bangor submarine base. The sighting was made by a mother and her two sons, who were driving west on State Route 12. According to Peter Davenport's report, the trio witnessed "a disc-shaped object, imbedded in a cloud of blue-green light, streak from north to south in the western sky...The object was reported to generate a peculiar 'tail' which streamed off the aft end of the object for a fleeting instant. All three witnesses believed they observed three lights on the top of the disc, and three lights on its ventral side, as well."[5]

According to the available sighting reports from that night, which appear to be of the same object seen from different vantage points, the only location where the UFO flew at low altitude—300 to 400 feet, according to Swanson—was when it was near the nuclear weapons storage complex at the Bangor nuclear submarine base.[6]

But Swanson's 1998 sighting was only one of many in the vicinity of Bangor. Three years earlier, on September 9, 1995, NUFORC got a telephone report of three UFOs flying over the base. Davenport's written summary of the call reads simply, "Man outside smoking witnesses thee dull orange' circular craft streak overhead to west. Each approx. 1/4 diameter of full moon."[7] The sighting was made in the town of Silverdale, some three miles south-southeast of Bangor's weapons storage facility.

Reports of UFO activity at Bangor/Kitsap also continued to occur *after*

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Larry Swanson's April 1998 sighting. On January 22, 1999, NUFORC received another report from Silverdale. The witness wrote,

Traveling south on State Hwy 3, approaching the off-ramp to the main gate of the Bangor submarine base, I saw [an] orange ball of light passing over the Luoto overpass (left to right) toward the base. The light was approximately 20-feet above the overpass, the size of a softball or volleyball, traveling at what I estimate to be 60-70 mph. When I exited the off-ramp 15-20 seconds after the sighting, I could not see the ball of light or anything that may have caused it, only normal car traffic...[8]

Eighteen months later, on July 17, 2000, another individual living in Silverdale filed this report with NUFORC:

At about 22:50 (10:50 p.m.) I went onto my patio to smoke. I noticed strange lights to the west of me over the Olympic mountains. There were four of them, very bright orangish in color. As I continued to watch them I could tell they were moving down very slowly. When the second to last one was gone, I saw a bright flash behind the mountain, like an explosion.

About 15 minutes after the last light was gone, I saw a bright streaming orange fireball coming from the south to the north. I first saw it around the mountain called 'The Brothers.' This light had a tail on it, unlike a contrail though...[The object] was moving too slow to be a meteor. As it moved to [the] north and its altitude decreased, it descended behind the other mountain [behind which] the other lights [disappeared]. At this time I noticed a helicopter in the area [where the four lights had been minutes earlier]. At about 21:30, the helicopter flew away from the area and flew directly over my town at an altitude of about 500 feet. I could clearly see that it was not civilian but a Blackhawk...[9]

Three years later, a Chevron-shaped craft was observed Hying slowly over the shipyard where Bangor's nuclear missile submarines are overhauled In

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written report to NUFORC, the witness' wife wrote,

On February 25th 2003, at approximately 7:30 p.m., my husband, returning to his vehicle after work in downtown Bremerton, looked up into the sky as he was walking towards his parking space and noticed a strange-looking aircraft flying directly over The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. As he describes [it], this craft was a triangle/ chevron shape. It had one light at each point of the ship, for a total of three lights, which did not blink, as most aircraft running lights do. The craft was at an altitude of approximately 800 to 1,000 feet, and it was moving slowly to the north. This craft made no sound, which my husband found to be quite odd, considering it was flying so low. [He also noted] the fact that there is a strict no-fly zone in effect over the entire shipyard and naval base. Did anyone else see this?[10]

If anyone did, they didn't report it to NUFORC. Nevertheless, the very next night, the same observer filed a second report, saying that a craft identical in appearance had again flown silently over the shipyard, before ascending vertically and disappearing.

A year-and-a-half after those incidents, on September 16, 2004, at 9:00 p.m., another UFO was sighted near the submarine base. The report filed with NUFORC described a "lighted object near the Bangor Naval Subbase, exhibiting [irregular] flight behavior." The reporting witness wrote,

Looking westward from the [western] shore of the Kitsap Peninsula, [we] saw a light in the sky that was moving in an erratic fashion relative to the stars that were visible in the night sky. The light would move left and right and up and down in small, seemingly uncoordinated actions. There were different colors that were emitted: green to red to orange. Light was also emitted from the 'corners' of the object, at 45-degree angles relative to the ground... This event was witnessed by two adults and four children. Wow."[11]

The observers were located in Poulsbo, some three miles north- northeast of the submarine base. The object had been visible for 10 minutes. At my

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request, NUFORC's director, Peter Davenport contacted the witness, Brian Junkin, who agreed to speak with me. Junkin said, "I'm not a UFO buff—far from it. I just wanted to say that before I continue. I've moved since the sighting, but my house was on Kimball Road in a community called Edgewater in the town of Poulsbo. I was out on the deck, which faces the Hood Canal and I saw a light that was moving in a weird way. At first, I thought it might be a bright star moving around in the beat waves coming off the ground. But that wasn't it. I looked at some other stars nearby and they weren't moving around. Twinkling, yes, but not moving all over the place. The light was emitting colors—not like beams of light—but it kept changing colors."

I asked Junkin about his posted reference to light emanating from the object "at 45-degree angles relative to the ground." I wondered if this display was similar to the one reported in December 1980, at the RAF/USAF Bentwaters base, in England, when security personnel at the Weapons Storage Area observed a laser-like beam emerging from a hovering UFO directly onto one of the weapons bunkers. But Junkin replied, "No, the flashes of light did not come off the object and go all the way to the ground—like a search light or something—and, on the other side, they did not go zooming off into space. But I did see flashes extending away from what may have been the corners of the object, in an angular way to one another. When that happened, it gave the main light a little definition, and it seemed like it was not really round or oval, but angular-shaped somehow."

I asked Junkin to estimate the object's apparent size. I told him to compare it with a dime held at arm's length. He thought a moment and said, "It was probably half that size." Then he said, "The thing that freaked me out the most was its movement. The light was just dancing around the sky, really erratically. I was intrigued, so I watched it more closely, thinking it might be a Coast Guard helicopter in trouble. But the longer I looked at the light, I could tell it wasn't a helicopter. I've seen lots of those, and at night too—Coast Guard and Life Alert choppers—so I knew this was something different. It looked like it was over the [Hood Canal]. It was, oh, maybe 500 to a 1000 feet in the air."

Junkin continued, "I ran next door to my neighbor's house. I could see they were out on their deck. So I stood there with my neighbor, watching the light.

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It was still moving in this erratic, bizarre way. It wouldn't stay still. It seemed to stay in one small area but it moved up and down in this uncoordinated kind of way, like it was wobbling. It was like uncontrolled controlled flight almost, if you know what I mean. Unstable but stable. It moved left and right too. If your arm was outstretched, it moved a distance from about one side of your thumbnail to the other, and then return to the other spot. It was dancing around for maybe eight to 12 minutes."

I asked Junkin to clarify his statement to NUFORC about seeing "another aircraft" which had flown near the first object. He told me, "Well, as I was watching the first light, this second light comes ripping in from the north, out of nowhere, down the middle of the canal. It was the same altitude as the first light. It just came ripping in! It was moving really fast, like a military jet. It had to be hundreds of miles per hour. It wasn't unstable like the other light, not at all. It looked like it was on a wire, or on a rail—an absolutely straight flight path. It flew right up to the first light, fairly close to it, and then just stopped! I couldn't believe it! The first light was still dancing. Then, all of a sudden, both lights went out at the same time, like somebody turned off a light switch. They didn't go racing off or anything like that—they just went out. I stood there another 15 minutes or so, just in total disbelief, trying to see if I could see them, even though they were unlit. But I couldn't."

Junkin's neighbor, Chuck Martin had temporarily gone into his house and didn't see the second light arrive. However, when I later spoke with him, he did confirm the presence of the first light. "It was strange," he told me, "it was larger than a star and moving around slightly. It gave off red, green, and white colors, all of them flashing." A week later, Martin sent me an email saying, "I talked with my son, Gabe, the day after you and I spoke on the phone. As I told you, I did not witness the [second] object coming in and then disappearing. However, Gabe stated that, while he was on the porch with Brian, he did see what Brian reported to you. He was not sure what it was but it did disappear. At that time I was not on the porch. Now I wish that I had been."

I asked Junkin if he knew the general layout of the Bangor submarine base, located just west of his home in Poulsbo. He told me he had once seen an aerial photograph of it. I asked if he knew where the nuclear weapons storage complex was located. He confirmed that he did, and said that he had been

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able to identify the many weapons bunkers grouped together in the photograph. “It’s massive, a really huge complex,” he said. I asked if the two lights had been over or near that part of the base. He said, “Maybe, at least within a couple of miles, but they seemed to be over the water, closer to where the nuclear submarines are moored on the canal.”

I am attempting to locate other witnesses who may have seen these objects from a different vantage point, in the hope of triangulating their actual position above or near the base.

Nine months after Brian Junkin’s sighting, on June 19, 2005, another UFO was observed flying over the town of Silverdale, located just south of the Bangor sub base. In his report to NUFORC, the witness summarized the sighting this way:

At 3:10 p.m. on Sunday (Fathers Day) my wife, my 30 year old son, and I witnessed a black rectangular-shaped object fly in a straight line and constant speed from south to north almost directly over Silverdale. The rectangle was flying with the long sides leading and trailing. There was absolutely no sound, identifying features, or lights. Since it was just a black rectangle in silhouette it is extremely difficult to estimate the size of the object or the altitude. But I believe it was a large object that was quite high. I would estimate the speed as being roughly equivalent to that of a jet fighter cruising at about 10,000 feet. I am 66- years-old, a former Air Force aircrew member, and I hold an FAA Flight Instructors rating. I am not a UFO nut. I have seen just about everything that has flown in our skies since the early 1940’s and I can say with 100% confidence that this object was totally anomalous. My wife and son are totally rational, dependable people.[12]

Twenty months later, on March 5, 2007, four separate UFO reports were posted on the NUFORC website, all apparently relating to the same object, but from different vantage points. One reads,

At [7:15 p.m.], from my front yard in Bremerton, I saw a solid red light directly above the smokestack at psns (Puget Sound Naval Shipyard). The

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object did not blink or pulse, but moved very, very slowly compared to any normal air traffic that frequents this area. I watched the object slowly move north, not traveling a very far distance, over a 10- minute period. It was from my location 30 to 35-degrees [above] the horizon. The object, to my best guess, was 3/4 [of the way] from the ground to the cloud deck—this is to give an [estimate of] it's altitude. The object stopped for approximately 3 minutes, then rapidly—within one second—dimmed, then got really bright, then disappeared from the sky. There were no clouds visible anywhere close to the object when it disappeared.[13]

As noted earlier, the Kitsap base utilizes the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard to overhaul its nuclear submarines. Two more sighting reports from Bremerton came into NUFORC the following month. Then, on July 16, 2007, a particularly interesting account from nearby Port Orchard was posted. The witness said,

[At 12:52 a.m.,] I was out walking my dog… There was a lot of cloud cover. I was looking up in the sky, toward the west, because the previous night I spotted a satellite flying over the Bremerton Shipyard, then over the Bangor Sub-base. Seeing satellites in this area at night is quite common. As I was looking toward the west, an object on fire was traveling overhead out of the southeast, on a straight line to the northwest. I could only watch it for 30-seconds [as it moved] in and out of cloud cover, until it disappeared into some thick clouds toward the Green Mtn. area of western Washington state… I saw no other lights and heard [no] noise (like a sonic boom etc.)...[14]

Well, perhaps this witness did indeed see a "satellite" passing over the shipyard and the submarine base on the previous evening, however, in the context of the other of anomalous aerial objects reported in the immediate vicinity of these two Naval facilities, a bona fide UFO sighting should not be ruled out until a thorough investigation has been conducted. Similarly, it has yet to be determined whether the fiery object sighted the following night was merely a fireball meteor, or something else.

Unfortunately, as is the case with most of the other reports mentioned in this chapter, a full investigation of this witness' observations—on both nights

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—was never undertaken, due to NUFORC's (that is, Peter Davenport's) consistently large caseload, not only of UFO sightings in Washington state, but nationwide. Davenport has performed admirably over the years at his self-appointed task of collecting and posting sighting reports. However, due to their sheer number—they come almost daily, month after month, year after year—he has been unable to conduct comprehensive investigations into the great majority of them. Even so, his published database at the NUFORC website is formidable, absolutely without peer, and an invaluable asset to researchers as well as the public at large.

As 2007 ended, NUFORC received yet another pertinent report from Silverdale. The witness wrote,

[On December 29th, at 9:00 p.m.,] my co-worker and I were headed to work, up on Bainbridge Island. When we had just passed the Kitsap mall exit… my co-worker noticed an object we first thought was a plane. He was concerned because it was very low. We thought it was moving [so] slowly that it might be making a crash- landing on the highway. As we neared it, it remained in the same location (Trigger Avenue, outside of Bangor base) as [if it were] still or hovering. Then my co-worker thought maybe it was a tower, but I've lived in this area for a long time and knew there was no tower there.

As we approached it, because it was hovering, I looked at it closely to determine what it was. When we first saw it, it looked like a plane with wing tip lights (white), a head light (white) in the middle, and I think I remember a red light. Underneath the object there were more lights (white), [but I'm] not sure how many. From what I could make out between the lights… the object was triangular or diamond-shaped and looked to be made of a shiny metal of some sort, like aluminum. It was hovering about 500- feet in the air, a few yards from the highway, over a farm. That night, skies were clear for the most part, but a little cloud cover. The object was in a little low cloud but, still visible. The object was large and it was silent. Whether it be alien or new military technology, my co-worker and I know for a fact we saw something out of the ordinary that night.[15]

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If the U.S. military does indeed have a radically new aircraft, possessing the capabilities described by this witness, one would think that it would be hidden at some remote desert base in Nevada, instead of being paraded around the Seattle/Puget Sound region, where potentially millions of people —all of whom would have no "need-to-know" about it—could sec the craft. This also holds true for the many other sightings described in this chapter—of discs, spheres and rectangles.

If the Pentagon actually has such advanced aircraft, would that technology be repeatedly and unnecessarily exposed to public view in such a random, seemingly pointless manner? It is a virtual certainty that if such secret military craft exist, they would be kept secret as long as possible, just as the stealth fighter and bomber were. Would the U.S. Air Force, or some other group within our government, intentionally reveal its possession of dramatically-advanced technology—an ace in the hole, so to speak, which could be used in the next war, with whichever adversary America is fighting that particular year? Such an unnecessary exposure of a Top Secret program would never, ever occur. Therefore, in my view, the UFOs seen around the Bangor base are not U.S. secret weapons.

Kings Bay

If there were another base for U.S. nuclear missile-carrying submarines, one might reasonably predict that UFO sightings would be reported there as well. Well, that sub base does indeed exist, and there has in fact been a significant amount of UFO activity reported in its vicinity. Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base/Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic is located near the town of St. Mary's, in southern Georgia, just north of the Florida line. The submarines based there patrol the Atlantic Ocean and other seas closer to Russia. According to globalsecurity.org, "Facilities at the base enable Kings Bay to serve as a homeport, refit site, and training facility for the Navy people [who] operate and maintain the Ohio-class strategic submarines."[16]

As for the nuclear missile support facilities, globalsecurity says, "The Strategic Weapons Facility, Atlantic (SWFLANT) provides strategic missiles and strategic weapons system (SWS) support to the fleet ballistic missile fleet. SWFLANT is responsible for assembling the D-5 [Trident] missile and

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processing missile guidance and launcher subsystem components."[17] Moreover, in 2005, the Department of Defense's Base Closure and Realignment Commission recommended that Nuclear Test and Evaluation activities, conducted by the Naval Ordnance Test Unit—located at Patrick AFB, near Cape Canaveral, Florida—be moved to SWFLANT at Kings Bay.

Okay, do you suppose that whomever is piloting the UFOs might be interested in all of this nuclear weapon-related activity? No surprise here: it definitely seems so. While the sighting reports submitted to NUFORC are not nearly as numerous as those posted by persons living in region surrounding the Bangor/Kitsap base, perhaps due to a much lower population density, they nevertheless reveal a real and ongoing UFO presence near Kings Bay.

The oldest report of significance was posted by a resident of Fernandina Beach, Florida, located some ten miles southeast of the Kings Bay base. The witness wrote,

[On June 23, 2001, at 9:45 p.m.,] we were sitting out in the yard, right on beach looking out eastward to sea, myself (M53) and my elderly parents (M87, F74). Dad says, 'What is that up there?' I said, it is a plane with its bright landing lights on, for we are very near Fernandina airport and private planes come and go all the time. But it kept on coming toward us and going lower. I would say descending from maybe 5000? to 2000? feet over a minute or two, but absolutely silent. The trouble was, it was quite a big circle of light, bigger than any star, white with bluish tinge, soft but strong, like florescent light? When it seemed to be about maybe 2000 feet due east of us, over the sea, it just stopped and remained stationary from then on. At that point its apparent area was about a fifth the size of a full moon… Never any sound at all.

After it had hovered like that about a minute, a mist or cloud was emitted by it from what seemed like three sources below its midpoint like at eight, six and four o'clock, so that the light came to be 'sitting on' a small mist or cloud in the completely clear sky. This is in the dark of the moon, just a fingernail [crescent] already setting opposite this in the west. Then it began to emit the mist or cloud also from vents above it, say at eleven and one

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o'clock. Thus it was completely enshrouded in the mist, but still the light was there in it, so the 'cloud' stood out definitely in the sky for maybe 20 seconds. Then the light was switched off, and the little cloud stood alone in the dark sky. The size of this cloud was about that of an ellipse with long axis up and down, about what would be covered by a 2-inch or slightly larger cookie held at arms- length. The cloud stood there about 60 seconds, fading but little, then whoosh, it disappeared in 5 or 10 seconds leaving nothing.[18]

Some four years later, another Fernandina Beach resident sent this report to NUFORC:

About 10:30 p.m. on August 4, 2005, as I was sitting in the yard, two aircraft came swift and low, and one close on [the] tail of [the] other, from the ocean, directly east of me, and on straight course about 20 degrees S of due W, passing south of me and disappearing WSW in about 75? seconds...We get lots of helicopters here, but those have flashing, piercing red light. And BIG noise. These [objects] were a dull, rose-red glow, having apparent size of pea at arms length, not just a point of light. Coming straight at me…

When they pulled up with me, they were like a star, point of white light, but once past, then again a dull rose-red glow color… Despite close range, there was no sound at all, ever, from the front one, and the back one [made] a sort of faint dull whoosh-hum [which] began as it passed me. [This sound] only resolved into a usual jet aircraft sound as it left and was well gone by to the west with me right behind it...[19]

Seventeen months later, a resident of Kingsland, Georgia, located some 10 miles west of the Kings Bay base, told NUFORC,

[On March, 14, 2007,]… I was watching the planes go over head and since I live near an airport there are at least seven planes flying in the sky at night. I looked over the trees and saw a very strange cluster of bright lights moving very slowly… The lights were flashing all the way around the center of the

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craft as it slowly headed over the trees... The UFO made no sound whatsoever and it was moving way too slow to be plane.[20]

Nine months later, a resident of nearby Kingsland, Georgia, reported this to NUFORC:

[On December 14, 2007, at 6:45 p.m., we saw] a triangle with [a] light on [each corner which] would fully burst in bright light. The color [sequence] was red and blue and white with a bright burst [of] light every so often. [The object] went right above our heads. It was about 500-feet off the ground, going real slow. It had a bright light that went off when it went across our heads.[21]

So, based on all of these reports, we can at least say that UFO activity has indeed been reported in the region around the King's Bay submarine base, at distances ranging from some two to ten miles away. In my view, all of the sightings included here resist prosaic explanations. Thus far, I am unaware of any dramatic report which would rival Larry Swanson's 1998 sighting at the Bangor submarine base, during which a disc-shaped UFO flew very slowly, at very low altitude, over or near the base's weapons storage bunkers. In fact, so far, no published report conclusively places a UFO directly over any part of the Kings Bay base. Perhaps one of my readers knows of such an incident, and would be willing to speak with me about it. On the other hand, it's entirely possible that no such UFO over flight has ever taken place.

In any case, the UFO sightings at, or at least very near to, Bangor/Bremerton and Kings Bay collectively suggest, if not confirm, an ongoing interest in our nuclear weapons capabilities—well after the end of the Cold War—by someone or something piloting unknown aerial craft. In short, the UFO-Nukes Connection continues to the present day.

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31. Things Gone By, Things to Come

Last night, out in the missile field, they attempted, once again, to make their point.

A cautionary message, freely offered, but apparently in vain.

We will be naked without the weapons, the strategists warned.

And what of the new paradigm, the unknown land?

We must not speak openly of these things, not yet.

If we pass through that doorway, there is no going back.

So tell the lies again, and postpone the inevitable.

Yes, this is too succinct, and oversimplifies the situation. And it obviously fails as poetry. Therefore, to finish the book, I will try to be a bit more expansive, although the message will be essentially the same.

After researching the UFO "phenomenon" for 35 years, I must conclude that the technology involved is so advanced that a human origin for it can be automatically ruled-out in almost every bona fide sighting case. The radar data alone substantiate the presence of craft operating in our atmosphere whose capabilities are vastly beyond our own aircraft and which defy known aerodynamic principles.

Therefore, the available facts suggest to me that extraterrestrial visitation, by one or more races of beings, is occurring. I further contend that such visitation accounts for all, or nearly all, of the nuclear weapons- related incidents presented in this book, as well as the secrecy surrounding those events.. In my view, the essential message being conveyed by our visitors is this: As long as nuclear weapons exist, they remain a potential threat to the future of humankind—and to the planet itself.

To those who think this a radical or ridiculous idea, it will be remembered that former Project Blue Book chief, Air Force Captain Edward Ruppelt, once revealed that high-level officers at the Pentagon had seriously considered the possibility of an extraterrestrial interest in our atomic weapons

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testing.

That particular discussion occurred in 1952, well before most of the nuclear weapons-related incidents reported in this book. Given what my sources have divulged—certainly remarkable accounts, but undoubtedly only a small part of the picture—I must assume that the current crop of UFO specialists at the Pentagon and the CIA have a far clearer understanding of the reality of UFO activity at our nuclear weapons sites than did their predecessors half-a-century ago, and more or less grudgingly endure it.

Moreover, given the pattern of ongoing UFO incursions at nuclear weapons sites over the last six decades, one might predict that as long as such weapons exist, that activity will continue to occur.

While overwhelming empirical evidence is not yet available, at least in the public domain, to confirm an extraterrestrial origin for UFOs, it can at least be said that some as-yet unexplained mystery has been thrown in the faces of those who planned, and still plan, to use these terrifying weapons. Despite the many unanswered questions, I believe the collective testimony of my sources, as well as those interviewed by other researchers, strongly supports the idea that those who pilot the UFOs are determined to make our military strategists and their superiors think twice, not only about using nukes as an instrument of war, but about possessing them in the first place.

Most of my ex-military sources, including former Air Force missile launch officer Bob Salas, agree with this contention. He says, “I honestly think, and this is pure speculation, but I really think the message is, ‘Lets do away with nuclear weapons. Don’t play with these nuclear weapons, because you’re going to destroy yourselves with them.’ I think they mean to send some kind of message like that, because all they did was disable the missiles [I controlled]. I think they probably had the capability of doing a lot more, and that’s all they did.”

Based on the limited evidence currently available, it appears that the Soviet Union also experienced such “anomalies” at their own ICBM sites, at least once, and at one of their nuclear missile warhead depots. (I suspect the total number of such incidents in the Soviet Union, and now Russia, is actually far higher.)

Despite both the U.S. and Russian governments’ national security

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concerns, UFO interference with strategic nuclear weapons—although entirely unexpected and certainly unsought—might, if openly acknowledged, prove to be a catalyst for worldwide nuclear disarmament and, therefore, serve to ensure the long-term survival of humanity.

"Ah ha!", the skeptics will say, "Hastings is just another one of those gullible UFO believers who thinks that aliens are here to save us from ourselves." Well, no, that's not really what I'm saying. The available reports from the missile fields suggest a scenario far more ambiguous, complicated, and subtle than that. In fact, a last-minute intervention by our visitors, to prevent the wholesale nuclear destruction of humanity, seems far from certain, and is not necessarily inferred by what has happened thus far.

The intermittent disruption of a few of our missiles, as described by ex-Air Force personnel, falls well short of a comprehensive intervention in the international nuclear stand-off. So far as the public knows, no alien has secretly communicated with the government officials of any nuclear-armed country, and issued an ultimatum to them to get rid of their weapons. Moreover, because thousands of nuclear warheads and bombs continue to be deployed by the major nuclear powers, there has obviously been no unilateral action on the part of our visitors to disable those weapons themselves, except in the most limited, intermittent manner.

Therefore, what has taken place to date appears to be more of a heavy hint, so to speak. As former Lt. Robert Jacobs nicely put it, maybe those who pilot the UFOs have—by their occasional interference with our nuclear weapons systems—"fired a shot across the bow of our nuclear silliness ship."

If Jacobs is correct, such a warning is, in my view, a positive development. However, the occasional disruption of a few weapons is one thing; an overt, decisive action by aliens to neutralize all of the nuclear weapons possessed by any two countries on the brink of war is quite another. As advanced as our visitors are, they still might lack the technological ability to pull off such a feat.

And then there is the question of will: We have no assurance that, after decades of futilely warning the key players in the nuclear arms race, those aboard the UFOs won't just throw up their hands in frustration, and watch helplessly—at a safe distance—while we humans nuke each other. In short,

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none of what has been described in this book necessarily portends salvation from the sky, should a full-scale nuclear war actually be launched by some nation.

So, in answer to those who might intentionally or unintentionally misconstrue my conclusions, no, I do not think that we can, or should, rely on outsiders to step in at the critical moment to prevent a nuclear conflict. We need to do that work ourselves, by eliminating nukes, as soon as possible. Although the process has already begun to reduce their numbers, at least in the U.S. and Russia, complete disarmament will be a daunting task, given the entrenched obstinacy of strategic planners and political leaders, on both sides of the ocean, who believe that possessing some nuclear weapons is essential for their nation's security.

So Show Yourselves!

Many people in my lecture audiences, after listening to my UFO-Nukes Connection thesis, have asked me why the aliens, if they are really here, don't just openly reveal themselves once and for all—like the extraterrestrial in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*—and use the same shocking, in-your-face First Contact to bring us to our senses about nuclear weapons.

After all, presumably the visitors could, if they so chose, land on the White House lawn, or outside of the Kremlin, and—at a single stroke—dramatically warn all of mankind against the perils inherent in possessing nukes. Because they have not done so, other factors appear to be at work—a larger game-plan of some kind—perhaps involving a gradual progression to open contact with humans.

Or, instead, the visitors may adhere to a policy of very limited interaction with relatively primitive species such as ours—one which restricts direct communication, in one form or another, to situations in which a potentially disastrous, planetary-wide crisis is imminent, consequently requiring some type of interference in the affairs of those semi-savage societies. If this second scenario has merit, there will be no dramatic UFO landing on the White House lawn, or in the Kremlin's courtyard, at least not anytime soon.

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The American Dilemma

Although I have attempted to present my research in a manner accessible to the citizens of every country, I am an American and must, at times, speak to my fellow citizens directly:

For me, one of the most important UFO-related issues has always been political and philosophical in nature. Our country's government has been proclaimed to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people. If this is indeed the case—and democratic principles do in fact guide our national policies—then a relative *handful* of people at the Pentagon, CIA. NSA, and the other intelligence agencies, must not be permitted to retain full and unchallenged discretionary power in a matter so momentous as the reality of UFOs. While the official disclosure about our visitors' existence and presence here must be handled with great care and consideration, it is nevertheless advisable and ultimately unavoidable. The basic question is whether a secret as important as alien visitation should continue to be hidden from the American people, and the rest of humanity, decade after decade.

As I see it, the ongoing UFO intervention in U.S. strategic affairs is now a tale that needs to be told, in unflinching terms, to our legislative assemblies, if possible, but from the rooftops if necessary. All bold endeavors bear both planned-for and unintended consequences. The inevitable admission by U.S. government officials that our nuclear weapons have long been monitored, and at times compromised, by those of unknown origin and objectives, is not without its perils. But the facts will—and should—become known, sooner or later, by one means or another, in a society such as ours. And that's a good thing. After all, isn't that how a democracy is supposed to operate?

Even the Russian government allowed the declassification of certain KGB UFO files, in the early 1990s, and apparently looked the other way when several retired Soviet Army officers spoke openly with Western researchers and reporters about the communist regime's longstanding interest in the phenomenon. It will be remembered that two of those officers candidly discussed an incident in the Ukraine, in 1982, when a UFO apparently activated several nuclear missiles, at least temporarily.

It is a sad commentary when the heirs of a discredited and dismantled totalitarian regime, such as the former Soviet Union, are willing to release

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sensitive, classified files on UFOs, and will further permit former army officers to speak freely about UFO activity at nuclear weapons sites but, for its part, the U.S. government continues to resist any open discussion of the subject at every turn.

While those in-the-know at the Pentagon and CIA can be expected to continue to view the unwanted interference with our nuclear weapons testing and deployment as alarming—understandably, since it is a situation over which they have no control—it nevertheless appears to be unavoidable, given the superior technology and unpredictable, hit-and- run tactics employed by our visitors.

All nations have national security secrets which need to be kept. Nevertheless, the fact that our officials are so determined to perpetuate the UFO cover-up begs the simple question: To what end? Is the secrecy designed to prevent the dire consequences of a possible public panic? Has Washington secretly learned of malicious alien intentions? Is the cover-up in place to protect the defensive advantage our military might gain from its reverse-engineering of one or more recovered alien spacecraft? Is the purpose of the secrecy to preserve, as long as possible, the planets status quo—keeping current political power structures intact, religious beliefs unchallenged, and human enlightenment about our cosmic connections indefinitely postponed? Or is the official silence on UFOs related to all of these things? We in the public simply cannot not know at the present time.

When considering the nuclear weapons incidents in particular, one might ask whether the U.S. government is operating to protect the American public against some genuine threat from above or, instead, merely attempting to keep all of us in the dark, as long as possible, regarding our visitors' apparently insistent, provocative actions at our nuclear weapons sites?

In other words, are "we the people" being defended, or is it actually our possession of nuclear weapons? While there are undoubtedly a myriad of considerations underlying the official cover-up on UFOs, the U.S. government is certainly concerned with maintaining its power and influence in the world—a position currently dependent, to a large degree, on its arsenal of nukes. Consequently, the question arises: On the issue of nuclear disarmament, can the American people rely on our leaders to do the right

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thing and rid the world of these weapons?

If our citizens were to be candidly informed about the UFO activity at our nuclear weapons sites, would the result be a broad-based questioning of the need for nukes? Even if only half, or a quarter, of the population were to actively agitate for their disposal, that would be a development our government—committed as it is to its nukes-based strategic policy—would not wish to confront.

So, again, the question becomes: Is the U.S. government's secret policy on UFOs, and their pilots' problematic behavior toward our nukes (at least from the Pentagon's point-of-view) actually in our country's—and planet's—best interests?

The Tasks at Hand

Until the official announcement about the visitors' reality and presence here finally occurs, what can we as average citizens do to address the situation? The word "grassroots" comes to mind. Each of us, whatever our path in life, whatever our preconceived view on UFOs, can begin to educate ourselves about the facts. Although the final answers remain mostly hidden at the moment—including the reasons for the visitors provocative activity at U.S. and Russian nuclear weapon sites—a general understanding of the UFO reality is still accessible, at least to some degree, for those inclined to seek it.

Moreover, U.S. Air Force veterans must courageously come forward and talk openly about their own UFO experiences at ICBM sites or Weapons Storage Areas. Other former servicemen and women, from all of the military branches, who served at the Nevada Test Site, or at sea, during the era of atmospheric nuclear testing, must also candidly report their UFO sightings. Many people will undoubtedly laugh at these accounts, at least at first, but—as the old saying goes—there is strength in numbers and, at some point, the skeptics will have to take notice, and begin to listen to the facts, as difficult as they may be to accept.

Therefore, I implore the military veterans reading this to step up and speak out. Those who have experienced the kind of encounter described in this book simply need to make their voices heard. Now that others have finally spoken the truth about the UFO-Nukes Connection, they will be in good

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company. Simple facts, frankly stated by credible persons, are powerful weapons in themselves. To any veteran concerned about the possible repercussions resulting from such candor, I note again, over the past 35 years, not one of my ex-military sources has had agents from the FBI, or any other agency, show up at his door, after going on-the-record about his (or her) UFO encounter at a nuclear weapons site.

Indeed, former Air Force missile launch officer Bob Salas has already spoken at the National Press Club, in 2001 and again in 2007, where he forthrightly described the night a UFO shut down his nuclear missiles at Malmstrom AFB, in 1967. Other such press conferences could be organized in the future, provided that those with similar experiences are willing to divulge them. If 10, or 20, or 50 former launch officers came forward with personal reports of UFO activity at our ICBM sites, would the national media really be able to ignore such provocative disclosures indefinitely? I think not.

Now, if this really needs to be said, I have never criticized or condemned the military veterans who worked with, or guarded, nuclear weapons over the years. Certainly not! During the international climate created by the Cold War—when the feverish production of nukes far out-paced sober reflection about the horrible consequences of their use—our nation came to believe that it was necessary to match the Soviets' arsenal, bomb for bomb, missile for missile. Those who served honorably in the nation's defense, under such circumstances, should be commended. Similarly, the nuclear missileers and bomber crews who are currently on alert have inherited the already existent East-West nuclear stand-off and must be appreciated in that context. As long as nukes exist, these persons' contributions to the defense of our country are essential.

That said, most of the military men once involved, or still involved, with nuclear weapons clearly understand the inherent danger in the now six-decades-long situation. On July 4, 1994, during a ceremony at Ellsworth Air Force Base commemorating the 44th Strategic Missile Wing's formal inactivation, Colonel Roscoe Moulthrop, the 44th's final commander, stated that the action "marked a step back from the brink of nuclear extinction and a step forward into the sunlit world of freedom for our children and their children."[1]

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While this is true—the wing's inactivation was indeed "a step back"—we've only just started the process of nuclear-downsizing, and there is clearly much yet to be done. All of us should hope that, in the near future, none of those children—from any country on Earth—will have to serve in a nuclear-armed military.

Spreading the Word

Even if the dramatic disclosures in this book go largely unreported in America, for whatever reasons, hopefully, the international press will not overlook such significant revelations, given the credibility of the witnesses. Fortunately, there generally exists a more objective type of reporting on UFOs outside of the U.S.

For example, in Great Britain, print and electronic media widely and fairly covered the recent release of some of the British government's UFO files, even though those documents contained mostly low-level information of minimal importance. Given this precedent, one would think that significant press coverage might also result if several former U.S. Air Force officers were suddenly to begin speaking publicly, in unison, about UFOs repeatedly shutting down America's Minuteman missiles! (Or, if a number of former USAF Security Police began openly discussing the appearance of UFOs near the RAF Bentwaters Weapons Storage Area, in December 1980.)

Other nations' media organizations have also openly and fairly reported UFO-related information. In 1999, after a quasi-governmental French organization released its assessment on UFOs, postulating their extraterrestrial origin, the story was given wide exposure around the world (but far less coverage in the U.S.). The European media also eagerly covered a press conference held by the Belgian Air Force, during which radar and other data were presented as evidence that large triangular-shaped UFOs had indeed been flying within the country's airspace on several occasions over a several month-period in 1989-90.

In short, the international media's reporting on UFOs is far more frequent and far more objective than that generally found in the U.S. Given the positive worldwide reaction to such coverage, it appears that a great many people in other countries are interested in, and respond well to, credible

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information on the subject.

While that same interest exists in the U.S., Americans cannot rely on our media institutions to routinely cover UFO sightings, or with the same degree of objectivity. I earlier mentioned the book, *The Missing Times*, journalist Terry Hansen's excellent expose on the negatively-biased and uninformed coverage on UFOs typically offered up by the elite American media.[2] Hansen's book should be required reading for any professional reporter, especially those working for the high-profile organizations based in New York and Washington. Will that ever happen? Probably not. Regardless, if the pundits ever decide to become serious about covering, and perhaps actually investigating, the topic of UFOs, rather than knowingly or unwittingly serving as mouthpieces for the Pentagon and the CIA (which appears to be their current role) they can begin by interviewing the ex-military personnel who were directly involved in one nuclear weapons-related UFO incident or another.

To that end, I will happily provide my sources' contact information to any reporter or assignment editor who asks for it. But I won't hold my breath while waiting for those inquiries. Perhaps I am wrong, but I suspect that most of the alleged reporters-of-record will instead continue to dismiss the accounts by military UFO sighting witnesses as being either fanciful or fraudulent. If they do, those journalists will betray the public they supposedly serve, and history's verdict on their complacency—or, in some cases, complicity—is bound to be harsh.

Scientific Responsibility

Now, a final word to those scientists—from any country—for whom consideration of the legitimacy of the UFO phenomenon is unthinkable: You may wish to reconsider your sage and sensible stance. That sound you hear is the current paradigm crumbling beneath your feet. While the opportunity has long since passed to be remembered as a true pioneer and visionary—that honor belongs only to a select few, including Drs. Hynek and McDonald—it is still not too late to refrain from claiming insight into a subject you have not studied, and about which you know little or nothing.

I do not expect the vast majority of the UFO skeptics in academia to

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embrace the revelations and proposals presented in this book. I know that most will haughtily dismiss my material as unadulterated nonsense, unworthy of their superior sensibilities and intellectual acumen. However, perhaps a few of those self-appointed experts will pause a moment and honestly reflect on the limited extent of their knowledge about UFOs, and then ask themselves whether it justifies their negatively-biased assumptions about the phenomenon.

A noted sociologist once told me, "When the reality of UFOs is finally confirmed, and universally accepted, there will be a thousand academic papers written on how the scientific elite around the world succeeded in fooling themselves for so long, by refusing to even look at the data."

No doubt, but that won't negate the fact that by ignoring, or prematurely dismissing, the UFO phenomenon, the supposedly scientific community has effectively hindered, for perhaps a century, humanity's understanding of its place in the *galactic* community.

I will now step down from my soapbox.

Final Thoughts

As long as I have been speaking publicly and writing about UFOs, I have said that a critical mass of evidence is currently lacking to prove the extraterrestrial hypothesis of UFOs. However, while it is technically necessary to have all of the pieces of a puzzle to complete it, one rarely requires every last one of them to comprehend the overall picture. Therefore, I will suggest that those who have read this book, but still scoff at the idea of alien visitors tampering with our nukes, simply cannot see the forest for the trees.

Yes, there is much that we do not know about the UFO enigma. Many of the facts are currently unknown or, at least, not readily accessible to members of the public. But the basic choice we have is a simple one. We as a species can either continue ignoring or avoiding the next phase of our intellectual evolution—by refusing to look for those missing pieces of the UFO puzzle—or we can make a collective effort to learn the truth, whatever that may be. One thing is certain: Neither blind rejection nor blind acceptance of the "phenomenon" will provide the answers we need. In my view, those aboard

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the UFOs do not intend to provide humans with many of those answers. Instead, they are prompting us to ponder and investigate their reality and presence here. The visitors are attempting to force us to think for ourselves, and to willingly act in our own best interests. It remains to be seen whether this is a temporary approach—part of the gradual acclimation process which I propose is underway—or a permanent feature of our relationship with them. In either case, the journey ahead will undoubtedly be an exciting one.

Finally, in attempting to understand a subject as complex and mysterious as UFOs, each of us must recognize the limitations of our own point-of-view. Although we all have our opinions, and some of us have studied the facts, no one has all of the answers.

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Appendix A: Contact the Author

This book could not have been written without the invaluable assistance of the former and retired U.S. military personnel, and others, who have agreed to reveal their nuclear weapons-related UFO encounters. It is my hope that many more will come forward after reading this book. Those who wish to speak to me—either on or off-the-record—may contact me at:

ufohastings.com

or

hastings444@atr.net

(If my email address should change, the updated one will be accessible at my website.)

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Appendix B: UFO Sightings at Commercial Nuclear Power Plants

Although my own research has been exclusively devoted to UFO activity at nuclear weapons sites, UFO sightings at commercial nuclear power plants have been reported worldwide for over four decades. These incidents are obviously integral to the UFO-Nukes Connection. A short, far from complete, compilation of them appears below—including the widely-reported sighting of a UFO that hovered over the stricken Chernobyl nuclear plant, near Kiev, in Soviet Ukraine, after one of its reactors exploded in April 1986.

But that dramatic incident was certainly not the first to be reported:

Yankee Atomic Power Plant

September 13,1967: In October 1967, physicist and UFO researcher Dr. James E. McDonald interviewed three individuals—F. Ward Fenn, Mrs. John E. Muzik, and Mrs. Ralph Rarey—who had reported seeing a UFO near the Yankee Atomic Power Plant, at Haddam Neck, Connecticut. According to the witnesses, the sighting occurred just after 11:00 p.m. As they were driving past the plant, they noticed "6-7 very bright lights" hovering over it, blinking on and off.[1] (Adapted from a synopsis by Mary Castner.)

Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant

June 24, 1984: Between 10:30 to 10:45 p.m., twelve security guards at the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant, near Peekskill, New York, reported seeing a UFO over the plant. It hovered directly above the exhaust funnel of one of the plants three nuclear reactors. UFO investigator Philip J. Imbrogno later interviewed six of the twelve security guards who saw the object. According to the witnesses, it was diamond-shaped and estimated to be 450 feet in length. It changed colors from white to blue to red to green to amber. Local police in Peekskill received numerous UFO sighting reports that same night.[2] (Adapted from a synopsis by George D. Fawcett.)

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Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station

April 26, 1986: Referring to the Chernobyl disaster, Dr. Vladimir V. Rubtsov, Director of the Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena, in Kharkiv, Ukraine, has reported:

"...about one month before the Chernobyl disaster I had a talk with an air traffic controller of the Kharkov airport. He told me that, according to pilots' reports, there was a rising number of UFO observations in the area of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station (ChNPS). Later it became known that on the night of the fire in the ChNPS, some 3 hours after the explosion, a team of nuclear specialists saw in the sky over the station a fiery ball of the color of brass...Just before the observation these specialists measured the level of radiation in the place where they were standing. It was...3000 milliroentgens per hour. [After the UFO left, it was] only 800 milliroentgens per hour..." ' (Adapted from MUFON's 1994 Symposium Proceedings)

In September 2002, *Pravda* published an article titled, "UFO Prevents Blast at Chernobyl Nuclear Plant", saying that hundreds of witnesses saw the UFO. One, Mikhail Varitsky, was quoted as saying, "I and other people from my team went to the site of the blast at night. We saw a ball of fire, and it was slowly Hying in the sky. I think the ball was six or eight meters in diameter. Then, we saw two rays of crimson light stretching towards the fourth unit. The object was some 300 meters from the reactor. The event lasted for about three minutes. The lights of the object went out and it flew away in the northwestern direction."[4]

Palo Verde Nuclear Power Station

Over the last decade there have been UFO sightings just west of Phoenix, Arizona, at the Palo Verde nuclear power plant. The National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) has posted accounts by at least three individuals who witnessed strange aerial activity there. One of the reports is presented here:

July 20, 2004: Bright lights southwest of Phoenix near Palo Verde Nuclear Power plant

[At 10:15 p.m.,] I was driving my 18-wheeler west on I-10. At about 20 miles west of Phoenix I noticed two bright glowing lights southwest of [me] and just east of the Palo Verde nuclear power plant. They were very bright

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[and illuminated] the foothills that run on the south of the freeway. [There was] about a 10-mile-distance from where I was and the lights in the sky. The lights were a bright orange, kind of like a street light. These two balls of light [were] side by side… As I was looking at them, all of a sudden, they just slowly faded away and then reappeared further west of the first [position] but this time the lights were on top of each other for about 5-6 min. I had just pulled off the freeway so that I could view them through my binoculars, but all I could make out was the bright light, and no formation. What was kind of rare was to see what seemed to be some jets flying close to the lights in a circling motion. Then all of a sudden [the lights] slowly dimmed out into the night sky. I could still see the jets flying around [and] I could hear them. I didn't see the lights anymore. A driver who was [traveling] with me saw this as well.[5]

Surry Nuclear Power Plant

May 19, 2008: Disk Sighted Over Surry Nuclear Power Station, Surry County, Virginia

"At about 12:20 p.m., 19 May 2008, I observed what appeared to be a large, metallic disk hovering very near the Surry Nuclear Power Station. [The sighting was] a little more than hour from the time of this writing, so the memory is still fresh and vivid.

… I spotted an object over the James River, moving from east to west at a very slow speed. At first I thought it may have been a kite because it was a very windy day (the winds were gusting out of the SW at 20-30 mph)...But when I came to an open spot in the road unobstructed by trees I stopped to get a better look and decided it was much too large to be a kite. It is about a mile across the channel to the Surry Station and what I saw appeared to be very near the station's twin domes and it must have been at least as large as they are, and perhaps larger. Besides that the object was moving very slowly against the wind, left to right from my vantage point, and its upper surface caught the sunlight and reflected like a sheet of aluminum foil. Its underside was dark. Then I thought that it might be an advertising balloon or dirigible, but the shape did not seem right. This was definitely a flattened disk. And, because it was so windy it did not seem like a good day to take a blimp up.

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(And, with security so high these days it does not seem logical that anyone would be permitted to get that close to power station. I have seen military helicopters on training missions over the river, but even they keep a wide berth from the power plant.)

I have eliminated the possibility of helicopters and small aircraft because, as I say, this object was hovering/drifting and appeared to be making a very leisurely circuit of the power plant. I walked down to water's edge to see if I could get a better look, but without binoculars I couldn't make out any other useful details. I watched it like this for a good 15-20 minutes. In that time it completely circled the station, moving against the wind. It appeared to correct its angle at times, very slowly rocking up and down..."

When NUFORC Director Peter Davenport posted this online, he wrote: "Traditionally, we do not post reports immediately upon receipt, given that even dramatic sightings often end up having some terrestrial explanation. However, in this case, the witness is a skilled scientist (retired), and he was able to observe the object for a considerable length of time, up to 20 minutes, he estimates."[6]

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